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HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

Thirteenth Century.

A.D. 1282 to 1300.

FROM THE SICILIAN VESPERS TO THE END OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

AFTER the dreadful massacre of the "Vespers," by which the Sicilians avenged themselves "for the rod of iron with which Charles of Anjou governed them, his taxes, fines, and confiscations; for the pride of the French conquerors, their insufferable incontinence, and the violence committed by them on the women of the island;" Sicily fell into the hands of Peter of Arragon, whose wife, Costanza, was daughter of the unfortunate Manfred, and the last of the Suabian branch; and, as such, could advance some claim to what was given her by the Sicilian nation, principally through the intrigues of that most astonishing of conspirators, Giovanni di Procida.

The Tuscan chronicler, Giovanni Villani, has recorded a touching expression of the anguish and despondency of Charles of Anjou's mind, when he received the intelligence of the loss of that beautiful island:—"My Lord God!" he was heard to exclaim, "since it hath pleased thee to turn Fortune against me, grant at least that my descent from the pinnacle of my power and glory be made by little steps!"—(Chron. lib. 7, cap. lxi.) He determined, however, on an exterminating war to recover Sicily. In his first enterprise—the siege of Messina—he was completely foiled, and forced to a disgraceful retreat. He was followed by Ruggiero di Loria, "il più valoroso

A.D. 1282. ed avventurato condottiere d' armate navali che fosse allora,"* who took twenty-five of his galleys, and burned on the coast of Calabria eighty Uscieri, or transports; and this under the eyes of the fiery Charles, who gnawed his sceptre, or truncheon, (apparently a usual trick of his,) with impotent rage.

Interdictions and excommunications were liberally fulminated by the Pope, (at the time, little more than a creature of the French conquerors,) but the wrongs of the Sicilian people had been real and excessive; their spirit was patriotic and unanimous, and the spiritual thunders of the Pontiff were as unsuccessful as the temporal arms of the King.

In Upper Italy, the insane wars of the Guelphs and Ghibellines continued to distract nearly every one of the little states. As the still powerful Charles of Anjou headed and protected the Guelph party, it was generally successful, though it sustained a sanguinary reverse this year at Forli, against which Ghibelline city the Pope had long been carrying on a remorseless war, and spending in it the money collected from the devout for the succour of the Holy Land. This same year also saw the commencement of a war between the Genoese and Pisans, described then as "popoli amendue potentissimi per terra e per mare," which did not end until Pisa was utterly ruined.

We cannot even give a list of the stupid Italian combatants during this period; but may remark generally, that their discord was fomented by Charles of Anjou and the Pope, as it was after by other kings and pontiffs, in the design of weakening each by these unnatural warfare, and then of subjecting them all.

"It is remarkable," says Mr. Rogers, who unites the

* Muratori, Annali.

judgment and acuteness of a philosopher to the feeling of a true poet, "that the noblest works of human genius have been produced in times of tumult, when every man was his own master, and all things were open to all. Homer, Dante, and Milton, appeared in such times, and we may add Virgil." This was certainly the case in Italy: during these troublous times, not only did Dante imbibe that spirit which was to render him immortal, but the energies of the Italians were roused to the very utmost in every little republic; and the seeds of enterprise, and emulation, and intellectual greatness, were sown on every hand. But the final result of this turbulent course of things must be the destruction of the very spirit and greatness it elicited, and so it proved in Italy.

A.D.
1282.

Charles of Anjou, after his reverses the preceding year, took the romantic step of challenging Peter of Arragon to a personal encounter. The place chosen for the duel was Bordeaux, then belonging to the King of England, whose consent it was deemed necessary to obtain. The day fixed was the 15th of May of the present year; and it had been declared by the two royal rivals, that whichever of them should be vanquished, or fail in his appointment there, should not only lose all right to the kingdom of Sicily, but be deprived, moreover, of his hereditary states, of the title of king, and banished for ever from all society of nobles and knights, as a felon, a traitor, and a man without honour. Each of the sovereigns was to be accompanied to the lists by a hundred knights of character and fame.

1283.

The Pope, who did not admire or approve of this precious piece of royal romance and chivalry, did what he could to dissuade Charles; and King Edward of England declared by letter that he would not give his sanction and securities for the duel within his dominions, were he

A.D. 1283. even to gain the kingdoms of Arragon and Sicily by so doing. But nothing could cool the ardour of Charles of Anjou ; and on the day appointed, his relative, Philip the Bold, the French King, advanced to within a day's distance of Bourdeaux, with a vast number of lords and knights, and a body of three thousand men-at-arms ; whilst Charles went on to the city and entered it, with his hundred knights chosen from among the boldest chivalry of Provence, France, and Italy.

On the other hand, Peter of Arragon, having left his Queen Costanza as Regent of Sicily, of which he had created Giovanni di Procida Grand Chancellor, had set out to keep his appointment. It does not appear that he was ever deficient in personal courage ; but the King of England had not guaranteed the field : the King of France was at hand—he might apprehend treachery, and certainly did not appear in the lists, where Charles remained on horseback till sunset, his trumpets sounding the challenge, and his herald repeating at intervals the name of the recreant Peter of Arragon. After the time prescribed by the uses of chivalry had elapsed, Charles repaired to the Seneschal of England, who governed Bourdeaux, and claiming his attestations to all that had passed, and declaring Peter to be a coward, and obnoxious to all the losses and dishonour included in the letter of the challenge, rode away.

Several chroniclers, however, add, in favour of Peter, that he *did* present himself at Bourdeaux on the 15th of May, but alone and disguised, to the Seneschal of England, who made a written act of his presentation, and received Peter's arms in proof of the same ; and Peter declaring that he considered himself not in safety there, that he held himself as disengaged from his promise by the conduct of his enemy and the King of England, and

that he feared to be waylaid and betrayed, he galloped away towards his own states of Arragen, and went ninety miles ere he took any repose. See Muratori, *Annali*, ann. 1283; Giannone, *Istoria Civile*, cap. xx. &c. &c. A.D.
1283.

Though the conduct of Peter of Arragon excited severe criticism among the chivalry of Europe, and was differently, and by some most odiously, represented, it did not detach from him the affections of the Sicilians—perhaps solely because he governed them better than Charles had done, and because their hatred to the French was more inveterate than ever.

Whilst Charles of Anjou was returning to his Italian states with fifty-five armed galleys and three large transports full of troops, the brave Sicilian admiral, Di Loria, the Nelson of these ages, defeated and took prisoner his son, Prince Charles, whom he had left at Naples as regent during his absence. 1284.

Defeated and humbled to the dust by the Sicilians, whom he had trampled under his feet, with the heir to his throne a prisoner in their hands, Charles died on the 7th of January, at the city of Foggia in Apulia, with a lie in his mouth, if he indeed uttered the words that have been attributed to him: “Sire Dieu!” said he, addressing the Host itself—the transubstantiated Divinity—as he received the last communion, “Sire Dieu! I believe that thou art my Saviour; and so I pray thee to have mercy on my soul! And as I made the conquest of the kingdom of the Sicilies only to serve Holy Church, and for no profit or coveting of mine own, so do thou pardon my sins.”* 1285.

On the 1st of May this year, the Genoese gained an im-

* Giovanni Villani, l. vii. Muratori, *Script. Rer. Ital.* vol. xiii.

A.D. factions, called *Di sopra*, and *Di sotto*, or the high and
1289. low.

The Venetians were at war with the people of Trieste, and defeated in a disgraceful manner, in a siege they laid to that city.

The city of Reggio, tired of its civil wars, and admiring the tranquillity which Modena enjoyed under the pacific government of Obizzo Marquis of Este and Lord of Ferrara, by unanimous accord gave itself up to him. Piacenza in the like manner resigned its liberties to Alberto Scotto. "And thus," says the judicious Muratori, "in a short space of time most of the Republics of Lombardy passed to a species of monarchy: the fault of the mad factions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines; the fault of the frequent animosities between the nobility and the people, or of the division and discord of the citizens from other motives of ambition, revenge, or civil litigation. The truth however is, that the government of these states being given to one individual (*ad un solo*) an end was generally put to private feuds."* But the glorious spirit of Liberty evaporated in tranquillity so purchased. The little despots *sometimes* shed more blood than the turbulent republicans.

1292. Ruggiero di Loria gained another great victory over the forces of Charles II. on the coast of Calabria.

1295. The Constitution of the Republic of Florence was violently changed, and rendered more democratical than it had been by Giano della Bella.

The great rivals Venice and Genoa were at war. Marco Basilio, with twenty-eight Venetian galleys and other vessels, was defeated in the seas of Greece by Niccolo Spinola, the Genoese admiral, with an inferior force.

* Annali, ann. 1290.

The city of Pistoja was divided into the factions of the Bianchi and Neri ; "and this poison," says a cotemporary chronicler, "was rapidly spread in the cities of Florence and Lucca, and other parts of Tuscany, where each of the cursed factions found protectors or partisans. A.D. 1296.

The Gualpha and Ghibellines of Genoa carried on a civil war within the city. The Grimaldi and the Fieschi (we are tired of these odious enumerations!) headed the Guelph party, the Doria ; and the Spinola, the Ghibelline. They defended themselves in their towers and strong houses, each party attempting to make itself master of the Palazzo del Publico, or municipal palace, and the other points of strength within the walls of the town. Many houses were burned to the ground, and the roof of even the Cathedral consumed, because the Grimaldi had fortified themselves in the great tower of that church. After the fair city had been the scene of these tragical proceedings for more than a month, the Grimaldi and the Fieschi, with the Guelpha, their adherents, fled, and the Ghibellines triumphant, elected a Spinola and a Doria to rule the Republic. 1296.

The long quarrel between the Pope and the Colonna family, which led to so many sanguinary deeds in Rome and its neighbourhood, began this year. It is said to have been hastened on by Stefano Colonna (the nephew of the two Cardinals Colonna), who unceremoniously made prizes of the mules that were transporting the Pope's treasure from Anagni to Rome. The following year, the Pope proclaimed a crusade against the powerful family ; nor did he stay his hand until much blood had been spilt, Palestrina, and some other of their fortresses razed to the ground, and the proud Colonnese, dressed in mourning, had thrown themselves at his feet and implored pardon and mercy. 1297.

A.D.
1299. Charles of Valois, a French prince, who had acquired great reputation by reducing the Count of Flanders to implore the clemency of his brother Philip the Fair, was invited into Italy by the Pope to oppose Frederic, the son of James of Arragon, and now King of Sicily, and every other enemy to the Church of Rome. The promises held out to Charles of Valois were almost as flattering as those which had attracted Charles of Anjou to Italy. He was to be imperial vicar and pacificator of Tuscany, Count of Romagna, captain of the patrimony of Saint Peter, Lord of Ancona, and prospectively King of the Romans, which latter high-sounding title (and now it was but a name, for the popes were kings) the Pontiff Bonifazio had refused to Albert of Austria.

The Thirteenth Century, which we have brought to a close, stormy as it was, was glorious to Italy. In its course, one of her little republics, the enterprising Venice, had captured Constantinople, and possessed herself of three-eighths of the Roman empire: her rival, Genoa, had also made extensive establishments in the Levant, and, in spite of their virulent factions and insane wars, a number of independent republics had sprung up and increased in wealth, civilization, and population. Though the science of war remained stationary, the more valuable one of law and civil rights made considerable progress, and literature began to be cultivated with ardour and success. Indeed, to this century, we may say, is due to the glory of the birth of the Italian language, the most beautiful of modern idioms, which, in the hands of the divine Alighieri, rose *at once* from its cradle to its throne of pre-eminence—from weak, uncertain tottering infancy, to manly maturity, without passing through the intermediate stages or grades that are ordinarily attached to the growth and development of every thing physical or moral. In this

age Matteo Spinelli, Ricordano Malespini, and Pier Crescenzi abandoned the barbarous Latin hitherto in use, and wrote their chronicles or their treatises in the colloquial idiom of the country: the muses whispered in Sicily, for the first time, in Doric Italian; at the court of Naples, the Emperor Frederic II., his secretary Pietro delle Vigne, and the princes Manfred and Enzo, cultivated poetry in the same language; to pass over others, of whom the names alone have been preserved, we can dwell with reverence on the early Italian fragments of Frà Guittone d'Arezzo, Brunetto Latini, Guido Cavalcanti—and Italy—the world,—has produced no second Dante.

A.D.
1299.

The Galley-Fight.

Io ti cercava, e non mi cal ch' io muora,
Se ti ritrovo.

B. Sestini, La Pia, canto

Oh quale
Qual mi dà forza il sol tuo aspetto ! Io tanto
Per te lontan tremava.

Alfieri, Saul, atto .

The Galley Fight.

“IN the years of Christ, one thousand two hundred and eighty-four,” saith that most picturesque of Italian chroniclers, Malespini, “Messer Ruggiero di Loria, admiral of the king of Arragon, who had taken possession of the island of Sicily after the massacre of the vespers and the expulsion of the Angevins, sailed from Sicily with a great armament of Sicilians and Catalans, doing great damage to the people of the absent king, Charles of Anjou; and he came with his armament of galleys even within the port of Naples, crying out, and saying words of great contempt against the said king Charles, and all his adherents, and asking battle of them. And this did the said Ruggiero in order to draw out the prince and his people to open combat, for he was cunning in maritime warfare, and he knew by his light courier boats, that King Charles with a formidable armament was returning

from Provence, and was already in the sea of Pisa and so he was impatient to fight, that he might depart and return into Sicily, before the king could fall upon him. And it happened that the Prince-regent, the son of Charles, who was present at Naples, seeing himself so insulted by Sicilians and Catalans, in fury and without order, embarked with his people in his galleys, and against the express commandment which his father, King Charles, had given his son, that in no manner, and in no case whatever that might occur, he should leave the port and range himself in battle, until his, the said king's return. But thus disobedient, and in ill order, the prince issued with thirty-five galleys, and more other vessels from the port of Naples, to fight Messer Ruggiero di Loria."*

It was with a joyful heart that the Sicilian admiral, who united to valour and good fortune, which in the long run is but another word for good conduct, a degree of skill in his profession of a sailor far superior to what we have any example of in these times, saw the ill-equipped and hastily armed galleys of the Angevin prince row beyond the protecting molo and piers of the port into the fair open bay of Naples. The insulting taunts and

* G. Malespini, *Storia Fiorentina*, t. viii.

bravadoes of his hardy, experienced crews, were continued, and gave fury and speed to the Neapolitans, until the foremost galleys of Prince Charles were within a cable's length of them ; but then, as belying their boasts, and showing themselves braggarts and cowards, the Sicilians and Catalans took to flight, and rowed with all their strength away from the shores of the gulf.

"Let not the insolent marauders escape us !" cried the prince, from the elevated poop of his galley ; "we must train them every one at our sterns into the safe harbour, and let my sire see, we can conquer in his absence ! Forward ! forward ! my Neapolitans, and death to the vesper murderers !"

Inspired by the voice of their prince, by their numerical superiority to the Sicilians and Catalans, and the confidence-bestowing sight of a retreating foe, the Neapolitans laboured well at the oars of their galleys ; and always near, but never quite at hand, with the fleet of di Loria, whose rowers were quite as active, they shot across the bay, and beyond the beautiful but not bold point, that Posilippo projects into the sea, dividing, as it were, the gulf of Naples into two parts, of which one runs in under Vesuvius, the mountains of Castella-

mare and Sorrento, and the other stretches round by Pozzuoli, Baiæ and Bauli, to the bold headland of Miseno.

The two fleets could now be no longer seen from the city of Naples, which was all animation ; but its thronging inhabitants poured themselves out on the neighbouring hills of the Vomero, Sant' Elmo, and Posilippo, to watch the exploits of their countrymen ; whilst others of higher condition, or greater patriotism, or with heavier interests at stake, mounted their horses and galloped round the shores of the gulf, after Prince Charles and Di Loria.

But of all those cavaliers who followed with anxious eyes the hostile armaments, which went farther and farther away from Naples, there was nobody seemed so intensely interested, as a young person in the garb of a page, accompanied by an old man, who wore the dress of a French courtier, and was known to most of the city as one of the household of Prince Charles. These two individuals had mounted two spirited little Calabrian horses at the very moment that pursuit seemed likely to carry the prince beyond ken of the town, and they were now descending the reverse of the hill of Posilippo to the plain of the Bagnoli, and the

open, curving sea-shore that extends to the ancient and picturesque town of Pozzuoli,—the younger of the two, with eyes so fixed on the galley which bore the royal standard, that he seemed scarcely to see any other object, and to leave entirely to his palfrey the care of the road, though that road was rough and steep, and at some points even dangerous.

Before they reached level ground, the galleys, both of Sicily and Naples, were seen spreading their sails to a gentle breeze that had sprung up; and in doing this, by the superior manœuvres and rapidity of Di Loria's crews, his fleet evidently gained time on the enemy, and shot a-head in beautiful style. The Neapolitans, however, laboured well in his wake with oar and canvas, and taunted the retreating foe with shouts so loud, that they could be heard far across the waves and on the shores of the bay.

It was a spirit-stirring sight, this same chase! and as if determined not to be left behind, but to witness all that might occur to the fleets, the young page put his palfrey to his speed, and spite of the remonstrances of his more sedate companion, continued to gallop without once drawing rein, until they reached the walls of Pozzuoli. Here the old courtier, who had several times shown strong

symptoms of discomfort, and would have given up the race had he been sufficiently master of his steed to restrain him, when preceded by his galloping, spirited companion, protested against the further continuance of the journey in such a manner.

"I aver, my gentle, but somehow hot-headed friend," said he, laying his hand on his companion's rein, "that this is not a mode of travelling befitting my state and dignity. I cannot ride now as I did at the battle of Benevento, when charging——"

"Not a word of the battle of Benevento," interrupted the page; "when you commence that theme you never end: besides, you know I have heard it all so often, and now I have ears and eyes only for the fight or chase before us, and the fortunes of my lord the Prince! I will not lose his gallant flag from my sight, shape they but their course inland, as they are doing, should I gallop as far as Gaeta!"

"Your anxiety is natural to your state; ay, and laudable," said the chamberlain, still holding his companion's rein, and moderating his speed, as they descended the steep, paved streets of Pozzuoli; but the Sicilians will all be beaten and taken without our aid; the Prince will be back ere long; and then figure to yourself his choler,

should he find his two favourite Calabrian steeds foundered, and learn this pretty scapado of yours. I shall never be pardoned for letting his pet bird escape the cage—I shall be disgraced, and of a good truth my bones ache sadly already from the rate we have ridden at, and my stomach requireth restoration. Pr'thee let us pause here and refresh ourselves and our horses, and then—”

“ Listen, Messer de Beaulx,” again interrupted the page, “ I shall not stop until I see the issue of this chase, or until my horse drops under me ; but you may stay where you are.”

“ And so add to the agreeableness of the account I shall have to give to the Prince of you, and of the care I have taken of you in his absence ! No, no ! where you go I must follow—but do ride somewhat less precipitously,” rejoined the chamberlain, in a supplicating tone of voice.

“ Then forward with me !” cried the page, twitching away the rein he held, and cantering out of the town, which they had now traversed.

From the open road beyond Pozzuoli, glancing over the truncated and fallen columns of the ancient temple of Serapis, and along the arches of the ancient mole, misnamed the “ Bridge of Caligula,” that boldly strides far out from the shore

towards the opposite part of Baie. the keen eye of the page again caught the galleys, which, pursuers and pursued, seemed now close together. Presently the fleet of Di Loria were seen to lower their sails, to close with each other, to reënt their speed; and those on shore thought this would be the scene of action. But their manœuvre of taking in canvas was followed by the galleys of the Prince; for the light summer wind had entirely died away; and on their long oars Sicilians and Neapolitans again swept over the smooth bay, which did not seem destined to witness the combat, as Di Loria now shaped his course for Cape Miseno at the head of the gulf.

The sea-washed walls of Pozzuoli, and the volcanic ridge of hills in the rear of the ancient town, were bespread with spectators, though not so numerously as when its old inhabitants crowded to witness the pageantry of the Roman Emperor,* whose caprice it was, that Puteoli and Baie should be united. Since those days the course of tyranny, and then the conquests and incursions of barbarians of various races, but all destructive, had desolated these—the fairest regions of Italy,—the proud Puteoli was shrunken to the modern

* Caligula. See Suetonius, &c.

and obscure Pozzuoli, and the fisherman's bark glided over the submerged bases of marine palaces,* which were all that remained of the patrician Baie and Bauli,† save here and there the ruins of a bath, or a rent temple on the shore. The population had not decreased more in number than in national spirit, and it was but as a pageantry or a spectacle that the mass gazed on the fleets and the banner of their Prince.

"Let us away and dress our vines," said a peasant to his comrades by the road side; "little can it matter to us whether Charles of Anjou, or Peter of Arragon prevail in the fight; our lot is to be equally oppressed and grinded by all, and come what masters that may to Naples, it is but to drain and degrade the Neapolitans!" Besides these sentiments of despondency and indifference, there were others of a livelier and more hostile character in the breasts of many assembled there, for it was with a sceptre of iron that Charles had ruled his conquests.

* The traveller will remember these sea-covered ruins, particularly those near the place called now "I Bagni di Nerone."

† Bauli, called by the peasantry Bacoli. I once passed a pleasant night at that little village in a Roman tomb, that some poor children had converted into a dwelling-house.

Meanwhile the impatient page, on whom many curious wondering eyes were cast, continued his rapid ride along the smooth beach, followed at some distance by his groaning companion. They passed the narrow dark passage cut through the hill by the baths of Nero, now the only road round to Baiæ by the sea-side, and galloping past the Roman ruins, without a glance at their fallen grandeur, they took the rough hilly path that leads by Bauli to Cape Miseno.

A picturesque mass of ruins now crowns the bold head-land; but that place, which had been successively a Roman fortress, a state prison, and a tower of the marauding Saracens, was in the days of King Charles a little castle, occupied by an Angevin garrison, and some obstinate adherents of the late king, Manfred, who sighed away the days of captivity, where the last of the Roman Emperors had pined and died.

The French warriors were gazing with elated hearts at the chase the flag of Anjou was giving that of Arragon, when Brasfort, the commander of the garrison, happening to turn his eyes in the direction of Bauli, suddenly exclaimed—

“Why, who are these that come at such head-long speed along the hill’s side, and seem so mindless of their horses’ wind and their own necks?”

“That foremost cavalier rides fast, but not well,” said one of his troop, watching the page, who was now near the tower; “that is but an unsteady seat he has in saddle; and what experienced horseman would gallop up a hill like this! By the rood! the palfrey is a gallant one, but he will rue this day’s work—see his smoking flanks, and the white foam on his coal-black breast!”

“I see—I see!” said Brasfort; “and, as I live, that old fellow who would come more slowly after him, if his steed would let him, is the silken old De Beaulx, who hath deemed one battle day in his life enough; and ever since he shouted “Montjoie, Chevaliers!” on the plain of Grandella, hath subsided into a sleek, delicate, prattling man of the court. The youth will be some hopeful page of the court; but he ought to sit his horse better than that!”

“The springal ought to be buffeted for treating his palfrey thus,” replied the soldier, with that regard for the noble animal natural to one who had passed a good part of his life in the saddle.

“But before we chide we must welcome the chamberlain of our gallant Prince on our threshold,” said Fortbras; and descending from the wall, he hastened to the tower gate, before which both of the hurried horsemen now arrived.

“Hail to you, my Lord De Beaulx!” said Fortbras, advancing to the breathless chamberlain; “it is long since I have seen you. My old solitary tower here is somewhat out of the beat of you courtiers, but you are right welcome! By the Saints and you have ridden well! I did not think there was such speed in you since you have left the coat of mail for the mantle—but I suppose you would fain see our galleys take those runaways!”

“Salve! salve!” replied the courtier in a condescending tone, as he recovered his breath, and entered with his companion into the fortress. “In good truth, Brasfort, I have been ridden unto the death—I am most anxious to see my royal master’s exploits, and—”

“How! is Prince Charles in the chase?—does that royal banner indeed denote his presence?” inquired the captain.

“Verily it doth,” said the chamberlain; “the lion hath gone forth, but—”

“Your Prince is chasing in that galley!” exclaimed Brasfort, addressing his soldiers, and paying little respect to the loquacities of the chamberlain; “Hurra for Anjou and Prince Charles!”

The captain’s shouts were repeated, until the old walls of the tower seemed to tremble with their

echoes. As they died away, the querulous voice of the old courtier, who had never ceased speaking, was heard by the now attentive Brasfort. "The day is of the hottest, the hour of refocillation is past, and I am fasting; gallant captain, I will intrude on your hospitality,—you will have fish from the Lake of Fusaro (a very delightful neighbour, be it said, Messer Fortbras!) and a wild bird or so from the woods of Patria, or perhaps a roe-buck from Astroni, and a draught of good Falernian. I am not dainty—I am an old soldier, you know, and we had but short commons and bad cooking the days before the battle of Benevento—and—"

"If he gets to the battle of Benevento," said the page, in a playful whisper to Brasfort, "we are lost: so prithee take *him* where he may eat, and *me* where I can see the galley of my Prince."

"First let me assist you to dismount, gentle youth," said the captain, who for the last few moments had been gazing on the face and form of the page with curiosity and surprise, and who now, as he held the palfrey's bridle and the stirrup, and received a gentle weight on his arm, felt instinctively and certainly the presence of woman. And the page who had ridden so hard, whose horsemanship they had so criticised, was indeed none other than

a young and lovely female, whose peculiar situation, and her heroic devotion to her lover Prince Charles, might extenuate the illegitimacy of her connexion with him.

The chamberlain had now also put foot to ground. These two visitors presented a curious contrast to the rough, half-iron clad warriors that occupied the tower, and of whom some had left gazing at the fleets to gratify their curiosity by looking at them in the court. The slight ærial figure of the page was simply and elegantly attired: a dark green mantle, with a narrow silver fringe at the skirt and collar, descended to the knee; broad, loose brache, or trowsers, of a light fawn colour, which were contracted at the ankle, left exposed prettily wrought sandals, that were bound round the ankle and over the instep with clasps of bright silver; a narrow white collaret, curiously embroidered with silks of various dyes, fell from the neck, a little way over the shoulders; and the head was covered with a broad green cap, which hung gracefully on one side, whilst a raven black plume floated on the other. Beneath this dark cap and sable plume, and within the frame, as it were, of her own jet-black hair, which, dishevelled and unconfined, fringed her cheeks, and fell in luxuriant ringlets down her

back, her face, always of the fairest, showed most exquisitely white and delicate. It was shaded, but it shone out like a candid lily from the gentle shadow of a green sward bank.

The appearance of the chamberlain was much more elaborate: his mantle and his hose were slashed and parti-coloured beyond the power of the pen to describe; the yellow boots he wore, though not carried to that excess they were at a later period by the French, when the curved-up toe almost intruded on the knee, were salient at their points, like the slippers of a Chinese mandarin; over the mantle he wore an ermine tippet, which covered his shoulders, and above the tippet again a white ruff, so ambitious in its dimensions, and so starch, that had it not been for a high-crowned, conical hat that surmounted it, it would have given to his head the appearance of John the Baptist's in a charger; a sharp peaked beard, and a shrivelled face, painted to conceal the ravages of years, reposed formally within this ruff, and its expression was a singular compound of luxury and dignity, frivolity and formality. In his hand he held a long white rod, and with this, and the air of one accustomed to exact the etiquettes of a court, he was now pointing forward to the door of the tower.

“In an instant,” said Brasfort, who at length had detached his wondering, admiring eyes from the page, “you shall find within our walls, poor though they be, wherewith to satisfy hunger and thirst;” and then, leading the way to his apartment, he muttered to himself, “An indigestion to the old courtly glutton who can think of feasting at a moment like the present!”

The Page, who remained in the court, did not await the return of the captain to conduct her to a place whence she could see the naval chase; but ascending with elastic step a flight of stone stairs, after some of the soldiers, she anon took her post on the outer wall of the fortress, which overhung the deep, blue bay, and commanded an uninterrupted view. Here, however, she was presently joined by Fortbras, and with every soul in the fortress except De Beaulx, a menial who waited on him, and some of the state prisoners confined in the back part of the building, she continued to watch the progress of Prince Charles with intense anxiety.

The two fleets were now close under Cape Miseno; and from their numbers and arrangement, and the lifefulness on board of each, presented a most animating spectacle.

The galleys of the Prince swept on their oars in one wide line, of which the royal standard of Anjou occupied the middle point ; whilst those of Di Loria went on in closer order, and in the figure of a wedge, whose rear angle was formed by the strong and lofty galley of the daring admiral, the shadow of whose flag-staff sometimes fell close before the prow of the Prince, so near were they together. On the decks of either fleet were seen crowding groups of knights and warriors, in bright armour, and their shields hung on the sides of the galleys, and, reflected in the smooth, glassy waves, contributed to form a martial but a beautiful picture. Ever and anon some impatient hand would draw a bow on board the Neapolitan fleet, but the arrow would either patter against the ranged shields and fall into the sea, or strike innocuously above head, in the masts or rigging of the enemy.

So perfect was the noon-day stillness on that romantic cape, and so admirable a conductor to sound the waters of the quiet sea, that not only the roll of the galley oars in their thules, and the striking of their long blades in the foaming water, but almost every shout, and word of command, or taunt, or ribald jest from French, Neapolitans, Sicilians, and Catalans, could be distinctly heard at the old fortress.

The enchanting scenery the cape commanded, and which was soon to witness scenes of blood and cowardice, or treachery, was such as no mortal pen or pencil can describe or paint; but no eye that hath once seen it can ever forget. In face of the cape, across a frith scarcely three miles in breadth, were the low, green island of Procita, and the towering, peaked, volcanic heights of Ischia; beyond them, and far away to the right over the blue sea, Ponza, Ventoteno, and others—a group of islets that seemed floating between air and ocean;—to the left was the memorable island of Capri, with its precipitous sides and rugged outline; and then the hills of Sorrento, which, in after years, was to be the birth-place of Tasso, who all but conveyed in verse the transporting beauties of nature, and the scenes of his early days; and then the gigantic Monte Sant' Angelo, crowned as with a spiritual glory, by a pure, white hermitage: and then the volcano of Vesuvius! and nearer at hand were the ancient Puteoli, the Patrician Baixæ, the whitened edges of the extinct volcano Solfatara; and the hills that bore the vines whose ruddy juices cheered the emperors and senators of Rome, and the Plinies in their philosophical retreat. And still nearer was the Lake Avernus, a fair, blue basin,

occupying the crater of another extinct volcano, on whose farther shore the imposing ruins of a Roman temple eyed themselves in its waters—Avernus, that will live in the undying strains of the *Æneid*, when earthquake, and eruption, the inroads of the sea, or the other accidents to which this singularly mutable part of Italy are subject, shall have choked it up, or effaced every trace of its form and existence; and in the rear of the cape were the melancholy hills of Cuma, and the Sibyl's cave, to which Virgil hath given the same immortality.

Such a region as this, which, of all the countries of the vast world, is that where volcanoes, history, and poetry have left the most numerous and enduring traces,* ought not to have been the scene of merely mortal contention; or, if it had, it ought to have witnessed some glorious and patriotic struggle, which should restore freedom to fair Italy, and raise "*La vedova, povera, squallida e mesta*,"† to that pre-eminence among the nations, to which Nature destined her. But the contest that now

* "*Enfin la contrée de l'univers où les volcans, l'histoire et la poésie ont laissé le plus de traces.*"—*Corinne* ou l'Italie.

Madame de Staël chose the Promontory of Misenum for the scene of her heroine's improvisation, and she could not have made a better choice.

† *Pétrarca*.

began was not of this character, nor had the beauties of nature, or poetry, or historic lore, that crowd here so as to bewilder the heart and intellect, any part in the anxious minds of the spectators on the promontory.

Of a sudden the fleet of Di Loria, who had artfully drawn the Prince out in a sea whence retreat would be difficult and succour impossible, laid upon their oars. The next minute, flanked by his strongest galleys, Di Loria turned his iron prow against the galley of Prince Charles, whilst the mass of his fleet seemed prepared to make a charge on the same devoted vessel, and a few galleys only stretched out in line before the rest of the Neapolitans.

The invention of artillery had not yet changed the tactics of warfare. The fleet of Di Loria, so suddenly and unexpectedly from fugitives become assailants, pressed on the enemy much after the manner of the ancient Roman galleys, striving to break them with their sharp, iron-armed prows, or to lay themselves alongside, where they might charge and fight hand to hand. The hollow-sounding, rude percussion of these iron beaks on the prow and flanks of the royal galley were soon awfully audible to the astonished spectators ; but

as the flower of the French chivalry fought by the side of their Prince, the Sicilians and Catalans in vain endeavoured to board or strike the royal standard. But on the other part of the Anjou line, the galleys of the Sorrentini, and other people of the kingdom, much abler sailors than the French, who were essentially out of their element, had little of the courage or ardour in the cause that animated the knights, at once gave way before the Sicilians and Catalans, and turning, fled across the bay, as the Egyptians in the Ambracian gulf from the side of the doomed Antony.

"By my soul, they retreat! the cowards and traitors flee without a blow, and leave their Prince!" cried Brasfort; and in the paroxysm of his rage, he threw the truncheon he held in his hand far over the waves, in the direction of the recreant Sorrentines.

"Ay!" cried a voice within a cell of the tower, "even as the false Apulian barons—accursed for ever be the recollection!—deserted a better prince on the field of Benevento."

"Benevento! who speaks of the battle of Benevento?" ejaculated old De Beaulx, who at length had left his refection, and come to watch his master's progress and look after the page. That fond

creature, whose heart had been buoyed up by the confident hope that her royal lover was to triumph, and who had gazed till now without speaking or moving, turned round at the voice of the chamberlain, and saying in a hollow tone of voice, "He is lost! my Prince is betrayed and lost!" caught, pale as ashes and almost fainting, at his arm for support.

The condition of the impetuous, unreflecting Charles seemed at this moment indeed a desperate one. The hoarse voice of Di Loria from his stern gallery was distinctly heard calling to his fleet:—"Let the fugitives alone,—seize the nobler prize, the Prince!—every galley against that royal standard!—a cup of gold to him who lowers it!" and with a rapidity of manœuvre, and a skill the French did not possess to oppose to it, the Sicilians and Catalans threw off the vessels that were still true and staunch, and closed round that of the Prince.

"Perdition on this foul, cowardly, unmanly mode of fight!" exclaimed Brasfort, who had bitten his lips till they bled; "the sea and the sickening boat were not made for the chivalry of France! Why did our Prince adventure in so dirty a game!"

"Oh for the fair battle-plain to bear our char-

gers' hoofs, that we might shout "Montjoie to the rescue! a rescue!" cried one of the hardy warriors.

"The foul thieves will take or slay our Prince!—See! they have so hemmed in his galley, that it cannot stir an oar!" exclaimed another.

"And so vindicate the wrongs of Suabia,—the death of the brave Manfred,—the murder of the innocent Corradin, and the bloody executions, the proscriptions, and imprisonment of those who were true to their masters!" cried aloud the same voice that had spoken before, from the cell in the tower.

At another moment, such words of a certainty would not have gone unpunished, but now the attention of the garrison was too completely absorbed to allow them to attend to a captive brawler. The lofty galley of Di Loria now seemed lashed alongside the Prince's, whilst another strong Catalan was taking him on the other flank. From the deck of each of the assailants the most desperate efforts were made at boarding,—some twice or thrice, a handful of men did effect a descent on the royal vessel; but they were again driven back whence they came, or thrown into the sea by the French knights and the barons that surrounded Charles.

These bold warriors in "morion and greave, and

shirt of twisted mail," and whose offensive arms also were superior to those of Di Loria's mariners, would still have held the battle in suspense; but the admiral exclaiming, "Cease this fight, and sink the royal galley! riddle her sides, that down she may go!" the Sicilians and Catalans drew back on their oars; and then with all their might, and in different directions, rowed against the ill-fated vessel, striking it with their sharp prows. At the same time, some expert Sicilian swimmers dived from Di Loria's ship, and coming up unperceived under the projecting stern of the royal galley, began to perforate it with sharp instruments.

The effects of this mode of attack, where the assailants were unexposed and the assailed beaten without the satisfaction of giving a blow for it, were soon visible. The sea-water rushed with tremendous rapidity into the galley, which became uneasy, vibrated, and swung round.

"By Heaven! they indeed sink the royal vessel! Our Prince will not even have the satisfaction of a warrior's death; he will be drowned like a dog!" cried Fortbras, walking up and down the rampart with the most agitated steps. But in a few minutes, when the riddled bark was pitching for its final descent into the mysterious depth of ocean, and

not till then, Prince Charles exclaimed from its giddy poop,—“We are your prisoners ! let me surrender to a knight, however !—I will sink with the ship ere I give up my sword to an ignoble foe !”

Di Loria instantly laid his galley near, and making himself known to the Prince from its deck, presently received on his board the royal captive, with Renaud Gaillard the Grand Admiral of Provence, the Counts of Cerra, of Brenna and Monopello, and the other noble knights who had fought for Anjou. Scarcely had they quitted the royal galley, when down she went, with her proud banner with her ; for the Sicilians had not time to tear it from its staff ; and after a hollow murmur, a bubbling and a flash of froth, the tranquil sea flowed over the magnificent war-ship.

The page, who had long stood with haggard eyes and clasped hands stretched towards him whom she would have saved with her life, but who had kept her senses even at the moment of his most imminent danger, now that she saw him safe, safe at least for the present, staggered and fainted, and would have fallen over the steep rampart, had it not been for one of the soldiers, who, more active than the chamberlain, rushed and caught her in his arms.

When the disguised fair one recovered, she might have blushed to find herself unbonneted and unbuttoned, with her feminine flow of hair, and neck and snowy bosom exposed among the warriors, who were sprinkling her with cool water; but one absorbing feeling rendered her almost insensible to the gentle instincts of her sex; and raising herself on her elbow, she looked, unheeding those around her, over the wide blue sea, where the Sicilian admiral was carrying away captive her Prince and lover.

Contrary to her expectations, and to those of all present in the fortress of Miseno, who concluded Di Loria would at once make way for Sicily, she saw his proud fleet, with a train of conquered galleys in their rear, boldly returning whence they had come, into the bay of Naples. She watched them in silence, until she saw them pass with a display of triumph the old town of Pozzuoli, and shape their course for the pleasant promontory of Posilippo. Then she turned to De Beaulx, who, like every one present, was almost stupified by the unexpected turn events had taken, and said, — “Let us to horse—we have no farther business here—to horse! to horse! — I will yet see my Prince, or die in the attempt!”

The chamberlain, whose bones still ached with the rapid ride of the morning, and who had not, like his companion, an absorbing intensity of moral feeling to make him insensible to personal incommodities, and who dreaded so speedy a repetition of fatigue; for the events we have described occupied scarcely more time than we have taken in writing the description; waved his long white wand, but neither stirred a step nor spoke a word.

The coal-black eye of the lady began to cast glances, in which anger was mixed with impatience, when the afflicted Fortbras, who could not help feeling her exquisite beauty even at a moment of dismay like that, approached and addressed her in a tone of respect, inspired by her devotedness to the Prince, and which concealed to his eyes the unseemliness of her disguise, and her condition, which could but be that of Charles's paramour.

"Fair lady," said he, "your fatigued palfreys have still need of rest, but before sunset you shall depart—by that time I can have made some necessary arrangements here, and I will bear you company with a warrior or two, to see you in safety, and learn to what this melancholy event will tend in Naples, where the minds of men are

ever fickle, and where are so many enemies to King Charles of Anjou."

"At sunset!—not before sunset? Brave warrior! it is an age till then! See—the fleet already approaches the island of Nisita—'twill soon be hid from our sight—and I would be near it—near him!" said the lady hurriedly.

"It shall be *before* sunset—it shall be as soon as we possibly can," replied Fortbras; "but, in the mean time, honour my humble refectory—you are fasting, and will ill bear the fatigues of the long ride!"

"A glass of water to cool my burning mouth," said the passionate young creature; "but speak not of food, I will taste none;" and she spoke in a lower voice;—"but tell it not to yon timid old man, or he may interfere with my resolves—I will take none until I take it with Prince Charles!"

The kind-hearted soldier, after having in vain striven to induce her to eat, were it but a morsel of bread, went and brought himself the cool water in a silver drinking cup, and then left her to make his arrangements in the garrison. She continued gazing on the fleet until it disappeared, galley after galley, behind the projecting cape; and then with a desolate, but impatient heart, sat herself down

on the rampart whence she had witnessed her lover's captivity.

At length the wished-for moment of departure arrived; and as the sun was setting in the direction of the sublime height of Ischia, and the purple-tinted mountains threw their shadows over the plain and the sea, with her starch companion, and Fortbras, and five well appointed cavaliers, the lady rode from the Cape of Miseno towards Naples. They went on at a quick pace, and, save when engaged in harassing speculations as to what fate the Prince would meet from enemies, cruel in themselves, and on whom cruelty had been so often exercised by the Anjou party, in dead silence. Fortbras could not help reading in the faces of many he met, an expression of malignant satisfaction; and when beyond Pozzuoli, and on the hills that there rise close above the sea-beach, their only road, he saw a group of disaffected peasants assembled, who hooted and insulted them with their joy at what had happened, he congratulated himself that he had come with an escort, as without it the lady and the chamberlain, obnoxious from the court-dress he wore, might have been exposed to injuries more serious than words.

Before they reached the grotto of Posilippo, the long subterraneous road leading from Pozzuoli, which was not illuminated by pendent lamps as now, the shades of night had closed in; and when they entered the grotto, where a more than cimmerian darkness reigned even at noon-day, the hearts of all the party were sensible of a redoubled depression, and a feeling of awe and superstitious terror. The heart of the woman and the lover, and after such a tragical bereavement as she had experienced that day, might well be the most susceptible; and as the red torch, which one of the warriors had provided himself with at the village that stands by the end of the grotto, flickered in the breeze, showing with grotesque light the sepulchral horrors of the place, for a few yards before and beside her, and no more; as that night breeze moaned in the caves and deep cavities that branch off from the sides of that subterranean passage, and as the beat of the horses' hoofs on the hollow tufo were re-echoed by those caverns with singular effect, it seemed to her ear as if she heard the mopings of evil spirits, or the lamentations of human beings in torture and death. Presently a distinct human voice, that the echoes of the cavern played with most capriciously, sound-

ed on her ear, and like the voice of her lover dying among his foes, or calling for her help. It was a benighted peasant returning from the city, whither he had been to get news, and who shouted to the approaching cavaliers, that he might not be crushed by their horses in that narrow dark passage.

"Whence comest thou, lout?" cried the foremost warrior with the torch, which he lowered to the peasant's affrighted countenance.

"From Naples, great Captain!" was the timid and respectful reply.

"And where are the Sicilian thieves?" cried Fortbras.

"After sailing in front of the town to show they had taken Prince Charles and his ships, they went across the bay, and their galley lights are now to be seen opposite to Naples, between Stabia and Castellamare," hesitatingly, returned the peasant; and he was allowed to continue his way with a "buona notte," and a recommendation to the Madonna of those who, durst he have spoken his heart's wish, he would have recommended to a very different personage.

The lady sighed to be disengaged from the horrid gloom and chill of the grotto; but being

obliged to go at the slowest pace, it was yet some time ere she emerged, with a feeling of comparative relief, under the ancient tomb on the hill above the grotto's entrance, which it is a delightful delusion to deem the tomb of Virgil.

The travellers were now soon within the populous city, where the greatest agitation, proceeding from a variety of political and personal feelings, prevailed. The corners of the great streets, the public squares, and the hostelries, all seemed crowded; and men whispered thoughts to each other which it would have been dangerous to divulge to the partisans and soldiers of Anjou, who were patrolling the town in evident apprehension of some popular revolt. Fortbras went with the captain of one of these parties to the palace, where the members of government, and many of the barons of the kingdom who happened to be in the capital at this astounding crisis, had assembled in council; and the lady and the chamberlain took their way to the quiet, retired suburb of Poggio Reale, where an elegant small house, secluded in a grove or labyrinth of acacias and orange trees, received them.

In this retreat, which Charles, to avoid public remark and the eyes of his father and family, had chosen for his bower of love, De Beaulx, who had

the somewhat dubious distinction of being a confidant, and taking care of his heart's idol during the not unfrequent absences of the Prince, and who had that morning been reluctantly induced by her prayers to let the disguised mistress follow to see the issue of the pursuit, now left her, with many injunctions and prayers that she would remain quiet until intelligence were obtained and he returned to her.

And the fair object of all this solicitude, and of Charles's enduring affection, was, despite of the severe but necessary restrictions of society, deserving of them. The orphan daughter of one of the Italian professors, the munificence of the polished Manfred had established at the university of Naples his father Frederic had erected, the beautiful Fidelia, had attracted the admiration, and fallen into the hands of the Prince at so early an age that she was scarcely sensible of the impropriety of her position. She had been educated with a care rarely bestowed in those ages on females, even of royal birth: to exquisite personal beauty she united an elegance of deportment, a gracefulness that displayed itself even in the most familiar actions; she spoke music, she looked love—and the love that warmed the heart that beat beneath that

gentle-looking bosom, partook of the character of heroic virtue. This she now showed.

Long before the grey dawn broke on a night of restlessness and anguish, the fair Fidelia, treading tip-toe not to wake the domestics, who might remonstrate, or even prevent her flight, passed the pleasant marble hall of the elegant villa, and rushing from its pillared portico, and across the fragrant grove where her lute had so often delighted the ears of her royal lover, took a solitary path which led over the plain that extends, between Mount Vesuvius and the city of Naples, to the sea-shore. Early as it was, she met several peasants carrying fruit and vegetables to the market in the city; and none of these could help gazing with surprise, and a sort of idle, half-unconscious interest at the hurried steps and striking appearance of the young page, for she still wore that disguise which was essential to her scheme.

By the shore of the bay where the shrunken river Sebeto pours its minute volume of water into the sea, she found a moored skiff, and, a few steps off, a fisherman's hut. The tenants of the latter she aroused. "I will give thee this purse of gold," said she, holding it before the but half-awake eyes of a grey-headed mariner;—"I will give thee this

purse of gold, an' thou wilt but carry me thither—to the galleys of Di Loria!"

"A purse of gold—Di Loria—galleys," muttered the stupified wight.

"Ay! a well-filled purse!" said Fidelia; and she poured out its contents in her pretty palm.

The fisherman rubbed his eyes, and looked as though he were bewitched, but his fears checked his cupidity.

"If I go thither, gentle sir," said he, "there into the lion's mouth, I shall have my boat, my only wealth save this hut, and yonder fishing nets, taken by the Sicilians."

"But here is gold enough," said Fidelia impatiently, "to pay for a dozen such barks as thine!—take it—hide it here, and pledge thine oath to carry me where I bid."

"But, generous sir, Di Loria may take me and my son prisoners with him to Sicily, and then, where the use of our gold?"

"Let thy son stay where he is, and come thou alone with me; thou canst land me there, under the cliffs of Vico, near the Sicilian fleet: with captives such as they have, they are not likely to attend to such as thou and I."

"But on my return I may be hanged by the

Angevins for practising with the enemy," replied the timid old man.

"O that I could manage a boat as I can sit a horse!" thought Fidelia; and then turning on the old fisherman with eyes that flashed with impatience and coming anger, she said, "Wilt thou, old coward! gain this purse of gold, or shall I go elsewhere? there are many boats between this and the mole of Naples, and doubtless many a mariner who would do my bidding for half this sum!"

"I will do it—I will go, father," said the fisherman's son, whose spirit was not depressed by the caution incident to old age; but on his speaking, the affections of nature rose in the old man's heart, and gave him the courage he wanted.

"No! not so, Nicolò," said he; "thou art young and healthy, and more of value than I: shouldst thou be lost, thy mother and thy sister would have none to protect them, and I should die of grief. Besides, thou art more likely to attract the attention of the Sicilians, and to excite the suspicions of the Angevins than I—a poor, weak old man. Say not a word, Nicolò, but put the oars and sail into the bark, for I will earn the gold of this noble youth."

The son obeyed: the purse given to the father,

on his solemnly vowing to do the behest of his passenger as far as in him lay, was remitted to his custody; and embarking, the grey-headed fisherman and Fidelia glided from the mouth of the little Sebeto into the open bay. They had scarcely left the shore when day began its rapid dawn, and soon the glorious summer sun rose between Vesuvius and the Tifata mountains. As its light dissipated the vapours and the gloom that hung on the sides of the mountains, and the port of Castellamare, she saw to her horror, that the galley fleet was not there; but running her eyes along the rocky coast, she saw it farther off, quietly at anchor near Vico. The object that had carried Di Loria to Castellamare was to release the Princess Beatrice, the daughter of king Manfred, and the sister of Costanza, now Queen of Arragon and of Sicily, and this having been obtained, by the commands to the governor of the castle, of Prince Charles his prisoner, Di Loria had shifted his position in the night.

A breeze never fails to accompany the sun's rising at this season of the year in the Gulf of Naples. Fidelia felt somewhat restored as it cooled her fevered cheek; and the fisherman, to avail himself of it, spread his small triangular sail: the light skiff flew like a sea-bird over the bay,

keeping near shore, by the roots of the volcano, and it passed the lovely spots where the ancient Herculaneum had been covered by an eruption, and where the modern palaces and groves of Portici had not yet risen, before the sun-rise breeze, which is always short, died away.

The old man had now to labour on his oars, and exposed to the full glare and heat of a summer sun, without a breath of wind, without an inch of shade, the situation of Fidelia was a most painful one. She had tasted no food ; but a faintness now overcame her, and with a faltering voice she craved a little water. The fisherman produced his earthen bottle ; it had been scorched by the almost tropical heat of the sun ; the water almost parboiled, sickened on her delicate stomach, and she was about to faint, when she saw Di Loria's galleys, from which her eyes had never been for a moment detached, moving from their anchorage. This sight, and the alarm it created in her loving bosom, thoroughly recalled her.

“ Blessed Madonna ! they are going, and we shall be too late ! Canst thou not row faster, old man ? ” she exclaimed wildly.

“ I will do my best,” said the old man, “ though my arms are already tired.”

“Talk not of fatigue ! ply thine oar, ply it well ! and in addition to the purse, I will give thee this, an’ thou but gain the galleys ere they go !” and Fidelia took a massy gold chain from her neck.

“If the galleys move, it is impossible that I should catch them in a bark like this,” said the fisherman ; “but perhaps they are not going,—not all going, for I see the admiral’s flag motionless there, under the cliffs of Vico.”

But the delicious hope these words inspired in the breast of Fidelia was soon dispelled by the projection of her long sweep of oars, and Di Loria’s galley followed those who had already left their anchorage.

“Merciful God !” she exclaimed, clasping her hands, “shall I lose him ! lose him, and so near to him ! Canst not row faster, old man—faster, I say !” and she who, on every other occasion of her life, had been so considerate of the comfort and welfare of others, would have worked the mariner to death !

But the old man was already exhausted : the perspiration dropped in large globes from his sun-bronzed face and breast and sinewy arms, and saying he must have a minute’s rest, he drew his oars within the boat.

“Give me the oars whilst thou takest breath,—

give me the oars !” said Fidelia, and she took them and rowed, unskilfully indeed, but vigorously, until she was bathed in perspiration ; her delicate hands were blistered. The old man relieved her as soon as he could : as he rowed, however, he observed that the galleys did not appear to be shaping their course out of the gulf, and presently remarked joyfully to Fidelia, that they were coming to, off the town of Sorrento.

“ A blessing on thee for those words of comfort !” she exclaimed ; and then dropping on her knees in the boat, and raising her hands to Heaven, she prayed most fervently that Di Loria might linger yet awhile until she reached Sorrento ; but at every motion of the galleys her fear returned.

The Sicilian, however, did linger there, until, creeping timidly under the cliffs that rise perpendicularly on this side of the bay, and almost expiring with fatigue, the old mariner landed her at the shallow cove which forms the port of Sorrento. She was most fortunate too, in the moment of her arrival ; for, as she landed, a procession of Sorrentines was descending the steep stairs which lead through a most picturesque ravine, from the town to the shore ; and these worthy individuals, the magnates of the place, alarmed at the visit of

Di Loria, were bent on a propitiatory visit to that dreaded admiral's galley. With little difficulty she obtained permission from the honourable deputation to accompany them in their boat; and with a fair display of fruit and flowers, not intended for the captive prince, Fidelia and the Sorrentines ascended the side of the Sicilian victor.

The eye of the impassioned lover sought on the crowded deck, and found at once, with a gush of rapture that had well nigh extended her lifeless upon it, the person of Prince Charles! But the eyes of the deputies, in their search of Di Loria, were less ready and less correct; for, seeing the prince in splendid armour, surrounded by his proud barons, and concluding that the finest and most honoured person there must be the admiral, they took Charles for Di Loria, and addressed to the son of their king the speech they had studied and prepared for his greatest enemy.

All kneeling at the feet of the Prince, the orator of the municipal deputation, after having cleared his voice with a sonorous hem! thus delivered himself:—

“Messer the Admiral, deign, on the part of thy town of Sorrento, to accept this fruit and flowers, and these fine palombole figs,—and take

these two hundred agostari of gold for hose money ; and may it please God, that as thou hast taken the son, so may'st thou take the father ; and be it graciously known to thee, that we Sorrentines were the first to run away in the fight."*

The laughable effect of this mistake was irresistible ; and even the Prince, spite of his calamities and the menacing aspect of the future, joined the laugh, and turning to Di Loria, who stood by in simple seaman-like attire, exclaimed, still laughing,—

"Per Dio ! Messer Di Loria, and these are very faithful subjects to my lord the king !"

It was beyond even Neapolitan impudence to face out an affair like this ; and so the Ambassador and his kneeling companions arose and hastily retired, amidst the shouts and laughter of all on board, wondering however, as they went, how so great and potent a signior as Di Loria should wear so shabby a jerkin.

The laugh of the Prince, however, could not end otherwise than in sad reflection, and he had begun

* The words of the chronicler, besides being quaint and characteristic, are an early and curious specimen of the Pugliese or Neapolitan dialect. "Dicendo : Messer l' Ammiraglio, come ti piace, da parte del comune tuo di Sorriento scipati queste palombole, e prendi agostari per taglio di calze, e piacesse a Dio, com' hai preso lo figliuolo, avesse lo patre ; e facemoti assappare che fumo li primi, che voltammo !"

to muse on the fickleness of subjects, the probable faithlessness of friends, now that a cloud was on his fortunes, when turning round he saw a faithful, fond eye beaming on his—and he knew his Fidelia, in spite of her disguise, at a glance.

“What, my true one!” said he, as, insensible to the remarks and surprise he thus excited, he rushed to where she stood, and took her sun-burnt, blistered hand in his;—“what! art thou here? but how and wherefore?”

“To follow my Prince to the dungeon or the grave!” replied the devoted girl; “but speak to those who would know my business here, or force me from thee, whom I cannot leave and live!”

Charles whispered a few words in her ear, and then going to Di Loria, requested that he would not deprive him of the society of so faithful a page. The Admiral was courteous to his royal captive, and gave the permission he asked, without caring for the words of one of his officers, who said to him—“It is no page, but some love-mate!”

Prince Charles then retired with Fidelia into the cabin of the galley, and there, after having related her adventures since they parted, and wept with joy on his bosom, she partook of those refreshments she so much needed.

About an hour before noon, when another pe-

riodical wind began to blow, Di Loria's galleys sailed from Sorrento and the Bay of Naples, to carry their prisoners and prizes to Messina. But it was not until the fourth day of their summer voyage, when winds were scarce and brief, that the Prince and his companion, who was ever at his side, entered the rapid, narrow, and beautiful channel that separates Sicily from Calabria, and saw the fleet come to anchor in Messina's commodious port.

Nothing could surpass the joy or the applause with which the victorious Di Loria was received by the Messinese, who, already warned of his brilliant successes over their detested enemy by one of his light courier-barks, had prepared for him a triumphal entry, and had been for some hours, and almost to a man, gathered on the marine walls to watch his approach.

Before the galleys came to anchor, they were surrounded by speronari and other boats, filled with admiring and impatient friends: as they entered the port, the air was rent with the acclamations of "Viva Di Loria!" and now, as he set foot on shore, followed by his royal and noble captives, the whole population of the town, men, women, and children—the bed-ridden, who could scarcely drag them—

selves along on the support of friendly arms; and infants, who cried in alarm at the astounding shouts of joy and triumph, crowded on his path, which was strewed with laurel and with flowers, and here and there crossed by triumphal arches. But hatred against the Angevins was as deep a feeling in the breasts of the Messinese, as admiration of Di Loria. After the massacre of the Palermitan vespers, Messina, the second city on the island, and which had acted against the French with as much vigour and, be it said, with as much barbarity as the capital, had a perilous siege to sustain from the avenging but unsuccessful Charles of Anjou; and the alarm and the miseries they suffered, when even their women, with dishevelled hair, were obliged to the hard labour of carrying stones and mortar, to strengthen the walls of the town * against the ap-

* “ Onde si fece una canzone, che disse :

Deh com' egli è gran pietate

Delle donne di Messina

Veggiendo iscapigliate

Portando pietre e calcina—

E questa canzone si fece per questa cagione (

).

If these lines were written at the time, as the chronicler seems to state, they are among the earliest specimens extant of Italian poetry.

proach of the Angevins; and the thousand anxieties and heart-burnings they had felt were fresh in the memory of all, as well as the long account of bloody deeds Prince Charles' father had perpetrated on the unfortunate Suabians, a member of which family was now their queen. Eyes glowing with rage, and no eyes can better express the violent passions of man's nature than those of the Sicilians, were cast on the Prince, and the knights his fellow-prisoners; nor was it without difficulty that Di Loria saved them from the excesses of popular fury. In several instances, the cries of "Death to the French! Let us deal with this Carlotto * and his crew, as when the bells rung vespers at Palermo!" were raised, and echoed by thousands of infuriate voices—and once the anxious Fidelia saw a dagger's point within a yard of the breast of her royal lover, by whose side she walked. But before the scream on her lips escaped her, and ere she could throw herself between the Prince and the weapon, one of the Sicilian captains struck it from the hands of a fanatic partisan of the house of Suabia, who was secured, and prevented from giving further molestation.

But besides the loud and deep curses of hatred

* A contemptuous diminutive of Carlo, frequently applied to Charles of Anjou and his son.

and revenge, the cries of triumph, the taunt of vulgar men, the humiliated Prince had another bitter pang to experience, when, at the order of the Messinese magnates, he was separated from his faithful knights, the companions of his misfortunes, and shut up in the strong Castle of Mattagriffone, whilst they were conveyed to another and a worse place of imprisonment within the city. Almost, indeed, had he lost such comforts as he could yet find in the company of the page, and she all her heroic sacrifices, for the Messinese were about to send the pale and heart-breaking Fidelia away with the rest of his suite, when Di Loria begged the Prince might be allowed the services of one youthful and not formidable attendant.

The old Castle of Mattagriffone, within whose gloomy walls the Prince and the page were now immured "con buone guardie,"* stood on the declivities of a fair green hill behind Messina, and the lovely views from the grated windows of its cells, of the freely flowing strait, the olive woods, the orange groves, the white walls of Reggio, the rocks of old Scylla, and the vine covered hills and the towering mountains of Calabria, though they might for moments soothe, generally increased their irritated

* Muratori, Annali, ann. 1284.

sense of closeness and confinement. The gentle, affectionate, untiring ministry of Fidelia, would, however, at times abstract the Prince from his mental sufferings and the harrowing contemplation of the future ; and she, as she busied herself in attendance on him, and forced a gaiety and a hopefulness into her heart to lighten his, would at times become insensible to their wretched condition, and the perils that environed them, and be for minutes—for hours, indeed, happy.

Often as his brain was racked with the thoughts of his own imprudence, that had ruined his fortunes—the fortunes of his noblest and best friends, and entailed perhaps the loss of a kingdom ; as he reflected on what would be the rage of his father whom he had so disobeyed, and as his heart sunk in utter despondence, Fidelia would gently lead him to the lattice of his prison, and pointing out the ravishing spectacle of sea, and land, and gay blue heaven, would recall to him the existence of that Being, whose ways, inexplicable as they sometimes are, are the ways of mercy. At other times she would cheer the dreariness of the place, and his heart, with music and song ; and words like the following would declare at least the vivacity of her feelings :—

How free, how free the sea-fowl spreads his wings !
How gaily sails he by this castle wall !
And oh ! how blithe the sable *merle** sings
His song of freedom on yon poplar tall !

How freely flows glad ocean in his strait, †
Glancing in sun-light—rolling rapidly :
How freely blows the morning breeze elate,
Each zephyr hymning notes of liberty !

And oh ! those clouds across the free blue sky,
How fit they onward, silvery and fleet !
And oh, how freely rise those mountains high,
Heaven at their summit, ocean at their feet !

There 's freedom in the air—the sea—the earth !
All Nature shares it, and the meanest hind :
But thou, my Prince,—my love of royal birth,
Art in a dungeon's gloomy walls confined !

Thou who ruled'st provinces—nay, kingdoms wide,
Art pent and cabin'd in a narrow cell,—
The knights and dames that gather'd by thy side,
All, all are gone, but I am with thee still.

I still am with thee, nor my fate would give
For all thy soul-felt charms, dear Liberty !
My only object, thought, hope, wish, to live
With him I love, with him at last to die.

* The black-bird.

† The Faro, or Straits of Messina.

Ay! sail away, thou saucy, thoughtless bird!
 I would not follow thee, though thou art bent
 On to the matchless vale where beauty stirr'd
 The heart of Dis,* and she on flowers intent,

Herself the fairest flower, young Proserpine
 Felt the God's scorching sighs, and sulphurous breath —
 And as she fainted in his car supine,
 Let all her gather'd flow'rets fall beneath.

Ay! sail away! I envy not thy flight,
 Although untiringly thy wing it waves
 O'er Sicily, the sunny and the bright,
 To Afric's sea, from where Charybdis raves.

No! though at noon thou stay'st to cool thy beak
 In Arethusa's fountain of old fame;
 Or upward bearing in thy venturous freak,
 Thou wing'st thy way o'er Ætna's towering flame.

Or downward swooping hoverest awhile
 By Agrigentum's plain and lone abodes,
 Where yet in ruin† frown (a wondrous pile!)
 The God-like temples, men built to their gods.

* ——— Proserpine, gathering flowers,
 Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
 Was gathered.

O Proserpina,
 For the flowers now, that frightened, thou lett'st fall
 From Dis' waggon.

† Of the magnificent temples of Agrigentum, one dedicated
 to Concord is almost entire. Like so many other ancient

No ! though thou streak'st thy plumage 'midst the corn
That waves where Ceres' capital once stood,*
Where, of a goddess, first that art was born
That gives to man a sweet and bloodless food.

And though thou seek'st at last, when daylight closes,
Some quiet nook in that sequester'd vale
Where Acis loved, amidst a flush of roses,
His Galatea,—passionate and pale.

I would not follow thee ! nor hither hie
So far as yon near hill and myrtle brake,
Where at the noon of night *lucciole* † fly,
And nightingales their songs of sorrow wake.

I would not cross these iron doors or bars,—
I could not breathe in other air than this,
Where beam (my cynosure) my Prince's stars,
For still his eyes to *me* are stars of bliss !

When life its turmoil and its race hath run,
And death returns us whence we drew our birth,
The prince—the potentate—like lowliest clown,
Can claim no more than one brief span of earth.

edifices, it owes its admirable preservation to the circumstance of its having been converted into a Christian church.

* Castro Giovanni, now a romantic little town, is supposed to be the capital of the kingdom of Ceres !

† The fire-flies that abound in Sicily and the South of Italy, and are infinitely more poetical than our glowworms :

But I—whilst yet life reveals in my veins,
Am e'en contented with a briefer space ;
Nor ask, of all earth's mountains, valleys, plains,
A wider circle than my love's embrace.

In this manner the wearying, anxious days wore on ; but the external news that was allowed to penetrate the Prince's confinement, was not of a nature to soothe or revive him. The very day after Charles' signal defeat, his obdurate father, the king, arrived at Gaeta, whence, had he been a little sooner, he might almost have witnessed the fight ; and he brought with him fifty-five armed galleys, besides other vessels, that, had the Prince's imprudence not lost the rest of his fleets, might have given the naval preponderance for the present to the Angevins. When the King learned his son's disobedience and defeat, he was afflicted and enraged to the utmost, and exclaimed in the excess of paternal indignation, "O that he were dead ! since he broke my commands !" * but being informed of the little faith of his subjects of the kingdom, and particularly of the population of his capital, who were already running about with the factious

* "Or foss' egli morto, dapoichè fallì nostro comandamento."

cries of "Death to King Charles, and long life to Ruggiero di Loria!" he turned the fires of his wrath against them. He arrived with terror and dismay in his van, and from his proud galley off the port of Naples, he declared his dire intention of never landing at the faithless city, until he had reduced it to ashes. Many of the nobles with him were as incensed and ruthless as he, but some milder spirits pleaded for the beautiful victim.

"'Tis in vain ye plead for the false harlot!" cried Charles of Anjou, whose iron nature had not been softened by years: "beautiful as she is, I will destroy her, though I may afterwards moan over her, like the avenging husband over the lovely lifeless body of her who has betrayed him! Yes! the flames shall embrace the false one, from the bay's edge to the hill of St. Elmo!"

At this dread moment, when measures were concerting to execute the irate monarch's will, the minister of a Spiritual power, which ever ought to advocate the cause of mercy—the Pope's legate, Gherardo da Parma,—with sundry Neapolitan barons whose attachment had never been subject to suspicion, went off to the royal galley, and at their long instances and earnest prayers the doom of the city was revoked. But still, like a more modern

sovereign,* whose sex ought to have rendered her less vindictive, Charles would not land until a holocaust had been sacrificed to his vengeance. When one hundred and fifty of the Neapolitans had been put to death he pardoned the rest !

As soon as the feelings of nature, and the considerations of rational policy, surmounted the indignation of the disobeyed, indignant father, King Charles endeavoured, through the medium of the Roman church, to recover his captive son. To this desired end, two Cardinal legates were despatched by the Pope to Sicily, where they were to labour besides for the general restoration of peace. But the Sicilians were implacable enemies ; the advantages of the war were all on their side ; and though they amused the legates with words and conferences, they had no inclination to treat with the Angevins, or give up their prisoner, the heir to the crowns of Charles of Anjou.

Whilst these semblances of negociation were pending, the heart of the royal captive alternated between hope and despondency ; but he was crush-

* Caroline of Austria, who is universally accused of the dreadful cruelties and executions committed at Naples at the contra-revolution of 1799. See the admirable history of those events by V. Cocco.

ed with the dead weight of despair, when he learned that the legates had withdrawn in disgust from their unprofitable labours, launching as they went from the shores of Sicily a general excommunication against the island ; and, a few days after, that his father had died, more of chagrin and grief and disappointment, than of age or sickness, at the Apulian city of Foggia. What was now to become of the rich and lovely kingdom to which he succeeded?—what was to become of himself?

The people of Messina were disposed to give a hasty and a fatal answer to the latter query. Their fiery natures were roused to fury by the sentence of excommunication ; and when they learned, at this crisis of their feelings, that their old enemy, Charles of Anjou, had trod the dusky path of death, they resolved that his partisans in their power, and his son too, should follow him.

It was the dead of night ; and the gentle Fidelia was watching over the pale, worn features of her lover, who, after long restlessness, had at length fallen asleep. Her delicate hand shaded a lamp, that its rays might not disturb the unfortunate Prince, to whom sleep was the greatest blessing within his power ; her eyes were fixed on his features, which were frequently agitated as though by

troublous dreams ; and as she gazed, comparing the present with the past, and turning with horror from the contemplation of the threatening future, the tears she restrained or concealed when he was awake to see them, flowed in torrents. The stillness of the season and the place was so perfect, that the Prince's breathing, the rippling of the sea in its bold deep channel of the Faro, were distinctly heard in the cell, which was vast and gloomy, being only lighted by the lamp in her hand, and a smaller cresset that hung at the feet of a huge crucifix, whose blooded, writhed figure it partially displayed with horrid effect. Of a sudden, a murmur, and a noise of rushing footsteps, was heard from the town beneath the castle, and then a roar of voices rose from within the walls of Messina, which had been reposing in the broad moonlight, as tranquil as the slumbering infant on its mother's breast.

"Ah ! what sounds are those ?" cried the Prince, awaking from his short sleep ; "proves my dream true, and come they here to murder me ?"

He rose, and with the now trembling companion of his captivity, rushed to the narrow casement of his cell. The sounds that had increased in intensity were here partially reduced to distinct words, and Charles and Fidelia heard the Messinese ex-

claiming "To the prison ! to the prison ! and let us slay with our own hands those French villains our laws and governors will not punish for us ! To the prison ! to the French prison !"*

The horrid place of captivity of the French knights and the barons, the companions of Charles in his defeat by Di Loria, was not visible from the Prince's prison ; but the noise of attack and the most dreadful shouts were presently heard in the direction of the fated building where the unfortunate nobles, roused from their sleep, defended themselves with the resoluteness of desperation.

Harrowed by feelings and apprehensions too dreadful to describe,—trembling, breathless, they listened to the still deepening rumour ; and after more than half an hour of this agonizing uncertainty—a half hour that had been vainly employed by their infuriated, bloody enemies, to subdue the noble prisoners—they heard the Messinese shouting, "Fire ! fire ! let us set fire to the old prison and burn them in its flames !" Their hearts sickened ; but, though the shouts were continued, minute after minute, perhaps a quarter of an hour passed

* "E corsono alla prigione dove erano i Franceschi, per uccidergli, ed egli difendendosi, misono fuoco nella prigione, e a grande dolore gli feciono morire."

and there were no signs of the horrid incendiarism — could they not effect their purpose? had they relented of it?

Alas! no. Their sense of smell was presently invaded by a pungent, smouldering odour; a light fleecy wreath of smoke, that gradually darkened and enlarged itself, was carried by the night air past the old castle of Mattagriffone, and in a few more seconds the reflection of a towering flame, and innumerable small falling sparks of fire, struck their horror-fixed eyes. The sparks fell thicker and thicker; the reflection of the flames extended and brightened, until the pale face of the moon, and the twinkling stars, and the blue heavens, were reddened with its hellish blush. The sharp crackling of consuming timber and glowing stone, the hiss and the roar of raging fire, mingled with the shouts of thousands of furious voices; and then there came the shrieks of torture and despair, of those who were perishing by the most horrible of deaths; and then the cries of demoniacal triumph; and then a falling of the reflection, a cessation of the flitting sparks; and a silence, that told the Prince and Fidelia the atrocity was completed.

“Oh! my friends! my true and loving ones! my bold Renaud! my generous Cerra! my devoted

Brenna,—all my truest and dearest ! is it to a fate like this, my folly hath conducted ye !” exclaimed Charles, scarcely prevented by the aghast and shuddering Fidelia from beating his head against the iron bars of his cell window, and utterly unconscious for the moment of the cries the Messinese were now raising of “To Mattagriffone ! to the Castle of Mattagriffone, where we will do the like to the Prince !”

As the devoted Fidelia was holding the hands of her lover, and saying what words she could, the noise drew nearer and nearer, and presently the roar of maddened voices seemed to rise immediately from the front of the old fortress, which was in the opposite direction to their cell, and could not be seen thence. “Death to the Prince ! death to the son of Charles of Anjou !” was still the cry ; and anon Fidelia heard the clashing of swords, and a rush and a shock that shook the whole edifice.

“They come !” she muttered in an awful tone, and with lips as pale as her white forehead ; “they come—my Prince, my love, must die ! but the same blow shall kill us both !” and she twined her arms round his body, as though she would incorporate, or infuse herself, into that dear being, and be as she was in heart, but one in form with him.

Prince Charles had the courage of the nation and the race from which he sprang ; but quelled by calamity, depressed by captivity, harrowed to the soul's deepest depth by the fate of his followers, pent in in that dark cell, with not so much as a dagger in his girdle, with a lovely delicate woman on his bosom, running his perils with him, with the utter impossibility of flight or resistance, with the sounds of death every minute growing nearer and nearer, and louder and louder ;—it was not in human nature to bear all this and passively await the approaches of such a death without trembling. And Charles did tremble, and at length fell on the floor of his cell, with Fidelia still clinging to him like a part of himself.

It was not for either of these to fix the length of the horrid time of suspense that passed ; but it was not more than a quarter of an hour when the roar of voices ceased, or waxed fainter, and the revengeful host that had gathered round Mattagriffone, deterred at once by the strength of the fortress, the arrival of some regular troops, and the representations of some of Queen Costanza's ministers, withdrew from the spot and left the Prince in safety, at least for the present. The sufferers rose from the stone floor : Fidelia only

to her knees, on which she poured forth a prayer, and a thanksgiving to Heaven for the unhopèd-for preservation; but Charles went to breathe at his cell-window.

Day was now dawning on that night of anguish and horror; the light of the rapidly coming sun was chasing away the moon and her attendant stars; the mountains of Calabria rose from their light mantle of shadow and vapour, like giants unrobing themselves; the walls of Reggio and the Castle of old Scylla smiled in the eye of morning; the vineyards waved their green tendrils; the golden fruit began to glow from the groves on the hills; the sea swept rapidly and gaily, but tranquilly, through the straits; the birds already sang in the myrtle brakes on the Messina side of the Faro, and close to the gloomy walls of Mattagriffone, and silence reigned in the populous city at hand. There was nothing to tell of all that had been done, and all that had been suffered, save a fast dissipating wreath of smoke that hung near the scene of the night's atrocious tragedy. When the Prince threw himself on his couch and slept, and woke after awhile, all that had passed seemed but one of those fearful dreams, to whose visitations he had long been familiar, and

the tranquil sight of external objects he again took from his casement tended to confirm that such, and no more, was the case.

But though the Prince was thus spared from the ebullitions of popular rage and Sicilian ferocity, it was not intended, or it was not possible to prevent ulterior measures against him, so deep-seated was the hatred and revenge of the whole island. After mature deliberation it was agreed to appoint a court, which, in appearance at least, should juridically try the royal captive ; and to form this court, a Sindaco to act as delegate was named by Palermo, Catania, Syracuse, and every other town and important terra or district of Sicily. These ministers of national animosity met, and after brief discussion accorded with one voice, which was that of the whole island, in a sentence of death against Prince Charles, and that in revenge for the deaths of Manfred and Corradino, his head should be cut off, even as his father had cut off the head of the latter young and innocent Prince.

It was not many days after the night whose horrors we have described, that Prince Charles was warned by the governor of the Castle of Mattagriffone that he must receive a deputation of the Sicilian nation. "Let them come and insult my

fallen fortunes!" said the almost heart-broken prince or king: "I cannot choose, and have not the means of making a royal preparation for their reception."

"Still receive them as a Prince!" said the affectionate but high-minded Fidelia; and before the governor returned, ushering in the Sindachi of the island, she placed a stool for Charles to sit upon, covered his shoulders with a royal mantle of violet, embroidered with lilies of gold,* and took her post, reverentially as it were, at his left hand.

As these men, who had passed a sentence of blood, approached the royal captive, they showed countenances that denoted they were fully equal to the execution of their sentence. Fidelia, who had been as yet in happy ignorance of her lover's doom, shuddered as she looked at them, and knew their message could but be an evil one. Their robes were close and black; their hats, that no courtesy bade them remove, were high-crowned and broad-brimmed, and shaded their dark bearded faces, that were otherwise imperfectly seen by

* The surcoats and mantles of the royal family of Naples were azure or violet, embroidered with lilies of gold, which in the dresses worn on occasions of peculiar magnificence were edged or seeded with pearls, each fleur-de-lis being surmounted with the label Gules of the Angevine race.

the insufficient light that struggled through the narrow casement into the gloomy cell; their dark fiery eyes gazed on the Prince, as tigers on the victims that cannot escape them, and the voice of the president, who read the awful sentence of death, and the voices of the rest, who echoed its most striking and most dreadful passages, had worse than the raven's hoarseness.

"I could die," muttered the Prince: "I could face death, but not thus!" and then overcome by the weaknesses of nature, he wildly exclaimed, "But is there no mercy?—no mercy to extend to a defenceless captive!"

"Ay! such mercy as thou—as thine have blest their foes with,—such mercy as thy accursed father, whose soul is in hell, showed to our gallant Manfred,—such mercy as Charles of Anjou vouchsafed the gentle Corradino, when the youth's innocent head was lopped off and fell by the brook that washes the market-place of Naples! But ere that royal head, there fell a glove to the ground, transmitting to others the sacred duty of revenge, and our King Peter of Arragon has taken that glove, and by it thou shalt die, and on the scaffold like the young Suabian!" replied the ferocious Sindachi, who enjoyed as they spoke the abasement of their enemy.

But that abasement was only momentary :—recovering the nobleness of his nature, the Prince said haughtily, and pointing to the door of his cell, “Be it then so ! and on your heads the guilt of my blood, innocent of the deeds you repeat ! There ! leave me then, that I may yet have time ere I die to petition Heaven for that mercy man refuses me !”

The Sindachi, with the governor of Mattagrifone, retired ; the Prince, without moving from his seat, but following them with his eyes, until the cell-door closed between them, then rose, saying with a calm voice, “Come, my Fidelia ! and let us pray !” But the maiden had for some time been senseless to all that was passing there, having fainted as the voice of the Sindaco dwelt with horrid emphasis on the concluding words of the death-warrant.

When she recovered from her long and death-like trance, and found herself in the arms of her lover, whom his own inevitable and fast approaching doom could not render insensible to such intense love ;—and when she saw his sunken cheek, and fixed leaden eye, and felt his hand icy cold upon her’s, as though the influences of death were already upon him, she shuddered and wept, and

well nigh fainted again. But she rallied her spirits as the Prince said in a tone of voice awful, and utterly unlike any she had ever before heard from him: "Fidelia, it is meet I prepare myself for a death which is so soon to close a life not long but sinful! Do not unman me with thy tears! The sight of them and thy beauty withdraw me even now from the contemplation of immortality!"

The devoted girl soon recovered a heroine's strength of mind, and the sentiments of mingled affection and religion that now animated her might have pleaded before the throne of grace, in favour of a life infinitely more sinful or irregular than her's had been. "My Prince," said she after a pause, "surely thine enemies, cruel though they be, will not deny thee the consolations of religion, and the spiritual aid of a priest or monk!"

"I had not thought to ask them another favour or mercy; but I will petition for as much as this—for a holy man who may hear my confession and give me absolution ere I ascend the scaffold," said the Prince; and going to the door of the cell, he beat upon it, until the noise attracted one of the governor's attendants.

The man carried the Prince's message to his master, and soon after returned with an old man

in the simple and picturesque attire of a Franciscan monk.

Whilst the Franciscan was engaged in his holy office, and shrived her royal lover in one dark corner of the cell, Fidelia remained in silent prayer in another: and when confession and absolution were over, they all three knelt together and joined in one fervent supplication. Nothing could be more impressive than the group. The lattice-light, strong where it fell on them now in the middle of the room, but contrasted by deep shadows that occupied the rest of the gloomy sepulchral-looking apartment, displayed the pious countenance, the venerable beard, the shaven head of the monk, and the broad dark folds of his ample drapery; reposed on the pallid but handsome features of the Prince, who still wore the splendid garb of royalty, and with still more effect on the exquisite, the truly feminine face of the young Fidelia, and her graceful form in the graceful dress of a page. Though devotion was the feeling that gave expression to the countenances of all three, that expression was different in each. In the face of Fidelia a tinge of earthly love—earthly, but so pure and intense as to be almost divine; and the high determination and unchangeable resolve of one

about to devote herself to martyrdom, and to voluntary death, were mingled with the rapt look of religion.

When the monk departed, the Prince, who had made his peace with Heaven, could not avoid being again recalled to earth, as he caught this vivid expression, which still animated the pale and beautiful countenance of his too dear companion; and he said, for the first time weeping, "Oh, my Fidelia! for what fate art thou reserved? What will they do with thee when I am no more!"

She gasped a moment for breath, and then said in a voice that, though nearly a whisper, was so concentrated, so deep and penetrating, that it might almost have been heard through the thick walls of the prison. "When I reached thee, Prince, on board of Di Loria's galley, after such labours as only love for thee could have given me strength to endure, I said it was to follow thee to the dungeon or the grave, and I will die when thou dost, or—"

"Fidelia, my love!" interrupted the Prince, grasping her attenuated hand with his, and looking in her eyes, that glowed with a fixity of purpose,—
"Fidelia, we have sinned together, but we have prayed together, and sought with mingling voices

a reconciliation with offended Heaven; then do not risk its wrath and preclude the possibility of our meeting in love and happiness in a better world than this!—mine enemies, barbarous as they are, will not execute thee, and there is none of God's canons so severe as that against self-destruction!"

"And is it only, thinkest thou, the axe's edge, or the dagger's point, or the poisoned bowl, that can kill?—is there no such thing as a breaking heart?" She laid her hand upon her stricken bosom, and continued: "Why, I feel even now—but I would not die while thou livest!—that I could lay myself down on that couch and die of a grief whose wound is surer than that of the sword!"

"Fidelia! still my own Fidelia!" exclaimed the Prince, clasping her in his arms, and weeping on her neck. But *she* wept not as she said: "I cannot see it done. No! no! but when the blow of the axe strikes on mine ear, that will kill me! my soul will take its flight with thine, and thy foes may lay our bodies together!"

In discourse like this, or in prayers, the captives passed the rest of the day and part of the night. But in the middle of that fatal, horrid night, which was to be his last, the Prince fell into a sound

sleep, that was not even disturbed by the noise of the workmen in the court-yard of the castle, busied in erecting the scaffold for his execution—those sounds only interrupted the awful composure of his companion !

The dawn—the light of day, cheerful as though it summoned to a marriage festival,—glanced through the lattice on his couch, but the Prince awoke not ; and the morning was considerably advanced, and Fidelia expected at every moment the dread summons—the last—ere he opened his eyes, and sighed, “ Would that it were over ! Are they not coming yet ? ”

“ Ay, they come ! they come ! ” cried Fidelia, who was at the moment listening at the cell door, which she now left and rushed to fold her awakened lover for the last time in her fond arms.

The noise of a heavy, opening door echoed along the corridor that ran by the cell ; and presently the heavy tread of many feet, and the sounds of voices, were heard drawing nearer and nearer ; the clanking chain that secured the cell fell with a horrid sound ; the door was about to revolve on its hinges to open—to death ! She pressed the Prince closer—convulsively in her arms—her lips, colder than

ice, glued themselves to his;—the door opened, and men entered the cell.

The haggard eyes of the Prince were astonished by the apparition of a knight in armour, whom he recognised, as he drew nearer, as one of Di Loria's warriors who had behaved courteously to him, on board the Sicilian galley.

"I thank my enemies for this!" said he, addressing the knight, "I would surrender to none but a cavalier, when sinking in the Gulf of Naples; and 'twere an additional pang to be led to death by those vulgar burghers—the Sindachi, who—"

"Prince Charles!" hastily interrupted the knight, "I never would have accepted such an office! it is not to lead thee to the scaffold that I am here, but to inform thee that thy life is spared!"

"Spared!" muttered Fidelia, who still held the Prince in her embrace. "His life! oh, God of mercy!"—her grasp was relaxed, and she fell as one dead at his feet.

"Bewildered—stupified, it was some time ere Charles could retire to a corner of the cell with the generous warrior; and then he understood, at the time, but half his discourse.

"Our gracious Queen Costanza," said the knight,

“has laboured to prevent farther blood, and to spare thee!—though the daughter of Manfred—the near relative of Corradino, she would not execute a sanguinary revenge. She could not openly oppose the popular spirit, or the sentence of the Sindachi,—but, with the Infant Don Giacomo, she has at last succeeded in convincing them that it would not be proper to execute that sentence and dispose of thee without knowing her husband’s will; and has induced them to consent to thy removal to Arragon, where King Pietro still abideth. He is a noble Prince;—once out of Sicily, where men’s minds are yet furious against thee and thine, thy life will be safe. I myself have undertaken to see thee safely embarked, and in the middle of this very night, whilst Messina is buried in sleep, with a good escort, I will conduct thee to the galleys, Prince, and augur thee a good voyage and better fortunes for the future!”

“And is it true?” faintly exclaimed Fidelia, a short time after the noble warrior had left the cell, as she revived in the arms and looked in the altered, happy countenance of the Prince,—“and is it true, and art thou not to die, or have I dreamed—do I still dream?”

“My sweetest—my dearest—my foes have spared

this life, one of whose attributes shall be unceasing gratitude, increased affection to thee! By the Heaven that hath vouchsafed me its mercy! I will so honour and cherish my little page that princesses shall envy her!" And then the Prince imparted to her wondering, half-confused ear the interposition of the merciful Queen Costanza, and his coming voyage to Arragon.

Fidelia was so worn by tumultuous feeling, that she for a long while had no distinct sentiment save thankfulness; but at last she said, "Well, then, to Arragon! I will follow thee thither as here!"

During the day, both the Prince and his companion were frequently bewildered by the sudden and unhopèd-for change in their fortunes; and the latter, who had been so deeply heart-stricken, and so long without refreshment or sleep, frequently felt giddy and faint, and more than once swooned away; but when, in the depth of night, the escort arrived to conduct her royal lover from his prison to the galleys, she summoned up all her energies, and determined not to quit his side; and to watch well lest some mad Sicilian should repeat the attempt that had been made on his dear life when she landed with him from Di Loria's fleet, she walked close to him in the midst of the well-armed guard from the cell of Mattagriffone.

As they were issuing in silence from the gates of the old fortress, Fidelia's quick eye caught the glance of a horrid countenance glaring over the shoulders of the guards at the person of Charles. Its deadly expression alarmed her—she drew closer to the Prince—but the procession hurried on, and that face was no more seen.

The Sicilian knight led them close under the walls of the town, whose deep shadows concealed them; whilst from the stilly way in which they hurried along, and the wordless silence they continued to preserve, not even the guards on those walls were made sensible of their passage, and the removal of the Prince from Sicilian vengeance. At several points of their mysterious march, Fidelia could hear the foot-falls of the Messinese sentinels on the ramparts; and these sounds, or the barking of a dog within the town, and every other, though the slightest noise, made her tremble with fear for Charles. But at length all apprehensions were over. The party reached the sea-shore, at an unfrequented spot behind the port: a strong company of Di Loria's mariners were there with a barge to receive the captive Prince; and a brave galley floated on the waves, not more than the distance of half an arrow's flight from the shore. But even at

that instant of time, when hope and joy revived in her bosom,—when she felt at last the Prince was safe,—that his last footsteps were on the fatal soil of Sicily, the horrid countenance she had seen under the deep gate of Mattagriffone glared again on her eyes; the escort, concluding all peril to the Prince now over, did not stand round him closely as they had done; and as she tried in vain to utter a warning scream, she saw that savage man rush on her lover with a long dagger in his hand, and the exclamation on his tongue of “This for Suabia!” But the movement of the heroic girl was as prompt as the assassin’s; and throwing herself under his descending dagger, she received it in her bosom, letting her lover escape unharmed. She fell dead at Charles’s feet; and before the murderer could repeat his blow, the Sicilian knight extended him, lifeless as herself, by the side of his lovely victim.

The horror-struck Prince was carried on board the boat that presently reached the ready galley; but as the sails were spread to a favouring wind, and he careered over the waves, he looked back on the melancholy shore, and (could he do less?) wept with the bitterest tears the loss of so much beauty, talent, and devotedness.

Nearly five years after his defeat and captivity by Di Loria, Charles was liberated and restored to his kingdom of Naples, where many a scene must have recalled the memory of his Page, and where, in power and prosperity, he never again found a Fidelia.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

Fourteenth Century.

A.D. 1300 to 1399.

THE factions of the Bianchi and Neri continuing to devastate Florence, the Donati, and some other leading families of the party of the Neri, were thrown into prison by the advice of the poet, Dante Alighieri. A.D. 1300.

Charles of Valois assumed authority in Florence, where he was sustained by the Pope and the Guelfs. The Neri now recovered liberty and power; and the following year Dante, who had advised their incarceration, was thrown into prison by them, while his property was confiscated and his house razed to the ground. His imprisonment was soon followed by that exile from which he never returned (no, not even his bones!) to "ungrateful Florence." The same fate befel hundreds of others—hundreds of the noble and the opulent of the turbulent Republic; but our sympathies are almost monopolized by the wrongs and sorrows of the immortal bard. "Seeking a refuge at the courts of the Della Scala, lords of Verona, and other Ghibelline chieftains, he tasted all the bitterness of dependence and poverty; and pouring out in terrific invective and political satire the indignation of a lofty and imaginative spirit which had darkened in adversity, he filled the awful scenes of his great poem with the personages of contemporary history, and branded the crimes and dissensions of his age in numbers that will live for ever." 1301.

* Mr. Perceval's History of Italy, chap. iv. part i. For an excellent account of the fortunes of Dante, the English

A.D. Frederic of Arragon, who with his Sicilians effectually
1302. opposed Charles of Valois and the formidable army he had led into the island from Naples, concluded a peace with the French prince and the Pope, the principal conditions of which were that he was to continue to hold his insular crown under the title of King of Trinacria (one of the ancient names of Sicily,) as a fief of the Holy See, and that on his death it was to revert to the house of Anjou, from whom it had been wrenched by the Sicilian Vespers. This same year, one of the Colonna family, with a number of adherents, seized the treasures and the person of the Pope Bonifazio, to whom they could never pardon their former humiliation, in the Palace of Anagni. The Pope was rescued, but only to pass into the hands of the Orsini, another powerful Roman family, the rivals of the Colonna, among whom he was still as a prisoner. This outrage and insult threw him into a paroxysm of rage and insanity, in which he died.

1304. Benedict XI. the successor of the irascible Bonifazio, attempting to free himself from the thralldom in which the cardinals and Roman nobles now retained the Pontiffs, was carried off by poison.

But the murder of a Pope is not so interesting as the birth of a great poet, and this year is memorable in the annals of Italy for that of Francesco Petrarca, who was born (as Dante died) in exile.

“In the year one thousand three hundred and four,” (to use his own words,) “on the twentieth day of July, which was a Monday, and at the dawn of day, in the city of Arezzo, in the suburb called of the Orchard, I was born.”

reader may be referred to the “Lives of the Italian Poets,” by the Rev. H. Stebbing.

an exile (*esule io naquis*) of respectable parents, of Florentine origin, of middling fortune, somewhat inclining, to tell the truth, towards poverty, but expelled from Florence, their native home. A.D.
1304.

The Pöpedom was translated from Rome to Lyons, and finally to Avignon—an important event, described by the historians of the country, as having produced the ruin of Italy, and a wound for ever memorable in the see of Saint Peter. There were now as many signors, or little despots, in Upper Italy, as there had formerly been free republics. Bologna and Padua alone continued free, but the latter finally fell under the tyranny of the Carrara. In Piedmont the Counts of Savoy and the Marquises of Montferrat had ruled as absolute sovereigns; and though, by a popular revulsion, a Bonifaze of Savoy and a William of Montferrat had been enclosed in iron cages and ended their days in captivity, an organised republican liberty had never been restored. In Milan, once the centre of Lombard freedom, the tyranny of the Visconti had been succeeded by the despotism of the Della Torre family, and now, “under the flimsy veil of popular suffrage,” the Milanese, whose ancestors would not bend to an Emperor and a Frederic Barbarossa, obeyed the will of Guido della Torre. We have seen how internal factions produced this order of things—we may now trace, in a few words, how a respect for the authority of the emperors, who had scarcely been heard of in Italy for sixty years, was revived, and those foes to Italian liberty generally, again brought across the Alps. The revival of ancient letters in the universities of Italy had produced an extravagant respect for all that was ancient, whether elegant literature or law. The Pandects and the Codes of Justinian, and the arbitrary principles of the Roman civil law, were disseminated and recognised: “the despotic rights of the Roman Em-

A.D. 1305. perors had been proclaimed in the spirit of their decrees ; and the conclusion was easy which transferred the exclusive and unlimited supremacy of the Cæsars to sovereigns who, although elected by a few foreign princes, were supposed to inherit their dominion over the world." To this must be added, that the contemplation of a great empire at peace within its own vast boundaries, was apt to alienate men's minds from the fractious minute governments, and the petty princes that had usurped authority in them ; and that many, from personal annoyances and sufferings of the times, would feel rationally inclined to see a termination put to the unceasing dissensions maintained in Italy between the numerous paltry states into which she had been divided, by a unity of command and power.

1310. It was during the reign of these doctrines of imperial right and passive obedience, and these feelings of discontent, that the Emperor Henry VII. descended the Alps into Lombardy, where for a short time he asserted the rights of his predecessors, and reduced the signors of the cities to the rank of feudal nobles. But his impartiality between Guelfs and Ghibellines was unavailing ; his taxes alienated the affections of the Lombards, the Guelf towns revolted, alliances were made, and Italy was threatened by another general war, when Henry died suddenly, and changed the whole state of affairs. King Robert, who had somewhat irregularly succeeded to the throne of Naples, now aimed at the universal sovereignty of Italy ; and the old wars were renewed between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines in Lombardy and in Tuscany.

1313. The third of " the all Etruscan three," the " bard of prose," he " of the hundred tales of love," Giovanni Boccaccio, was born this year at Paris, whither his father, a Florentine merchant, had repaired on business, and been detained by the charms of a fair French girl—who never

became his wife! The circumstances of the early life of Messer Giovanni are involved in obscurity; but the date of his birth is fixed by his friend Petrarca, who says, in one of his letters to Boccaccio, "I, in the order of birth, have preceded thee by the space of nine years;" (Petrarca was born in 1304;) and that that birth was illegitimate, is proved by a papal dispensation of legitimation Boccaccio was obliged to obtain previously to entering holy orders, which was found in the archives of Avignon. See Baldelli, *Vita del Boccaccio*, lib. i. A.D. 1313.

Castruccio Castracani, one of the most extraordinary of Italian characters in the middle ages, formed a principality for himself in Lucca, and placed himself at the head of the Ghibellines. 1316.

The death of Dante is thus noticed by Giovanni Villani:—"Nel detto anno del mese di Settembri il dì di Santa Croce morì il grande e valente poeta Dante Alighieri di Firenze nella città di Ravenna in Romagna essendo tornato d'ambasceria da Vinegia in servizio de' Signori da Polenta con cui dimorava."—Lib. ix. cap. 133. 1321.

Castracani defeated the Florentines near the Castle of Altopascio, and took their Carroccio. 1325.

Louis of Bavaria, who had beaten his rival Frederic of Austria, and secured the Imperial crown, crossed the Alps to prosecute the plans of Henry VII. On his arrival in Lombardy, he had only a few troops of German horse; but he was presently joined by the Ghibelline princes, who crowned him with the iron crown of Lombardy. Meanwhile the Pope excommunicated him, and the Guelfs rose up in arms. 1327.

Castruccio Castracani died; and his death, added to troubles that had again broken out in Germany, obliged the Emperor to recross the Alps, and leave Italy to herself. 1328.

A.D.
1328.

The Duke of Calabria, the son of King Robert, and father of the unfortunate Joanna I. of Naples, also died this year.

At Mantua, another truly Italian revolution took place. The family of the Passerini had governed that city with absolute authority for forty years, when the indecent threat of one of the sons of the reigning Signior effected its ruin. This young man, in an affair of licentious gallantry, became jealous of Guido Gonzaga, who was his near relative, and with two other brothers of Gonzaga, the frequent companion of his debaucheries. In his first fury, he took an horrible oath that he would revenge himself in the arms of his rival's wife. Roused to indignation, the three brothers conspired not only against the foul threatener, but his whole house; and obtaining some men-at-arms from Cane della Scala, the Signior of Verona, he rode the city (*corse la città*) calling on the Mantuans to rid themselves of the tyranny and taxes of the Passerini. The call was obeyed. Passerino, the father, was killed in the first affray; his sons and nephews were taken prisoners and consigned to Niccolò Pico, and others of the Miranda family, who conducted them to the fortress of Castellaro, in the Modenese territory, where, in revenge for the death of their father, Francesco, inflicted by the Passerini, they shut them up in subterranean dungeons, and barbarously left them to die of hunger! The conspirators then proclaimed their father Signior of Mantua, and founded the dynasty of the Gonzaga, which preserved its existence to the commencement of the eighteenth century, and received its share of the adulation of the poets of Italy. The disturbances in Florence, the changes made in the constitutions of that republic, have been too numerous to detail, but one made about this time deserves marked attention. It was

passed into a law, that *all* the citizens of respectable character should be admitted to the government by rotation. A.D. 1330.

A new and most remarkable combatant entered the ever open lists of Italy. This was John, King of Bavaria, and son of the Emperor Henry VII. whose brief popularity and successes in Lombardy we have mentioned. This Quixote of Kings, who vaunted, and really practised the virtues of romantic generosity and self-denial, aimed at the glory of becoming the general pacificator of Christendom, and of renewing a golden age throughout Europe. His success in reconciling the factions and belligerents in Germany encouraging him in his assumed mission, he left the care of his own states to others, and traversed the Continent with the rapidity of a courier, to preach and to enforce "peace upon earth, and good-will to all men." In the performance of these hopeless functions he was on the confines of Italy, when the people of Brescia, enamoured of his reported virtues, offered him the signiory of their city for life. Numerous other cities followed the example of Brescia, and the Bavarian King accepted their offers with a reasonable hope that in Italy at least he *should* prove a general pacificator. The factions that had deluged the country with blood were reconciled, and dwelt, unanimously for once, with admiring enthusiasm on a king who acted as a holy apostle. But Florence was proof to the charm: Azzo Visconti and Mastino della Scala took alarm at the progress of the foreign prince; a league was formed between the old King Robert of Naples, the Florentine republic, and her allies; and John of Bohemia, though he had brought the flower of the French chivalry into Italy, for a truly chivalrous object, saw his Utopia rapidly fall to pieces, and in—
 "—With characteristic levity" he abandoned his project 1333.
 and Italy altogether, and went to Paris to figure in a tour.

A.D. 1333. nament, having somewhat stained the purity and disinterestedness of his character ere he went, by collecting all the money he could drain from the cities under his sway!

1337. Guelf and Ghibelline warfare again raged in Italy. Mastino della Scala, Lord of Verona, had by treachery and arms absorbed the whole of the Trevisan march, and possessed himself of a vast and rich country, which by pressing on the republic of Florence on one side, and on that of Venice on the other, excited the jealousies of these susceptible governments, and led to a league between them that terminated in Mastino's defeat and humiliation.

Frederic, the King of Sicily, died, and was succeeded by his son Peter II. in spite of the treaty of 1303, which, as we have seen, stipulated that at his death the crown should revert to the Angevins of Naples. King Robert, the reigning sovereign of Naples, asserted his rights at the death of Frederic, and again (five years after) on the death of Peter II. and by arms; but neither his extensive means and superior talents, favoured by the divisions of the Sicilian nobles, the imbecility of Peter, and the minority of his successor Louis, nor years of warfare, could enable Robert to triumph over the independent spirit of the islanders, who would not have a French prince to rule over them, and at last peacefully retained the descendants of Frederic.

1342. The Republic of Florence underwent the most disgraceful of her revolutions. Walter de Brienne, a French adventurer, and titular Duke of Athens, having distinguished himself by some valorous deeds in their service, and supposed to have favour and influence at the court of Robert of Naples, whose succour they required in a pending war, was invested by the Florentines, not only with the supreme military command, but with the civil autho-

rity of captain of justice. By flattering the democracy and cajoling part of the nobles, who hated the reigning party, he soon established himself as a despot. In a general parliament of the sovereign people, it was resolved by the clamorous voice of the multitude to bestow on the Duke of Athens the signiory of Florence for life; and though the more virtuous citizens, as well as the oligarchy, regarded the measure with horror, the idol of the hour was installed by the armed nobles and the riotous populace in the Palace of the Priors. The standard of the Republic was dragged through the mud, and publicly burnt with the book of the ordinances of justice; the arms of the state were thrown down from the public buildings to be replaced by those of the new signior, and Walter de Brienne remained Lord of Florence.* A.D. 1342.

Throughout all the vicissitudes of party, Florence had never yet lost sight of republican institutions. Not that she had never accommodated herself to temporary circumstances by naming a signior. Charles of Anjou had been invested with that dignity for the term of ten years; Robert, King of Naples, for five; and his son, the Duke of Calabria, was, at his death, Signior of Florence. (There was a uniform maxim among the Italian republics, that extraordinary powers should be conferred on none but strangers.) These princes named the Podestà, if not the priors; and were certainly pretty absolute in their executive powers, though bound by oath not to alter the statutes of the city. But their office had always been temporary. Like the dictatorship of Rome, it was a confessed, unavoidable evil; a suspension, but not extinguishment of rights. Like this, too, it was a dangerous precedent, through which crafty ambition and popular

* Perceval's History of Italy, chap. iv. part 3.

A.D. rashness might ultimately subvert the Republic. If
 1342. Walter de Brienne had possessed the subtle prudence of a Matteo Visconti, or a Cane della Scala, there appears no reason to suppose that Florence would have escaped the fate of other cities; and her history might have become as useless a record of perfidy and assassination as that of Mantua or Verona.*

But, fortunately for Florence, the Frenchman's talents were very confined, and his tyranny expired of its own excesses in less than a year. After several conspiracies, there was a general rise against him; his foreign soldiery were slaughtered,—the narrow streets made impervious to his gens-d'armerie by barricades, and he was finally taken prisoner in the Palace of the State. The Bishop of Florence, one of the heads of the justifiable conspiracy, saved Walter de Brienne's life; but he was compelled to abdicate the signiory—to quit the city for ever, and his obnoxious ministers were torn to pieces by the merciless populace.†

1343. On the 19th of January died “Robert King of Naples, and Lord of Provence, and of other States in Piedmonte: a prince no less celebrated for his piety than for his literature, for his justice, wisdom, and many other virtues. It is written by Giovanni Villani, that in his old age the King contracted the vice of avarice, from which he left his grand-daughter the heiress of great wealth.”—Muratori Annali.

This grand-daughter, the beautiful Joanna, was only

* Mr. Hallam's Middle Ages, chap. iii. part 2.

† The perfidious tyrant of Florence, after his expulsion, underwent a series of adventures, was created constable of France, and found a death more honourable than his life on the field of Poitiers.—See Perceval's Hist. Ital.

sixteen years of age when she succeeded ; her Hungarian husband, Andrea, or as he was commonly called in contempt by the Italians, Andreasso, was only a few months older. The Queen's misfortunes began with her reign. A.D.
1343.

The young King Andrea was strangled at Aversa, a small town near Naples. 1345.

Louis King of Hungary, and elder brother to the deceased Andrea, hurried to Italy to avenge his death, which he attributed to the young Queen his wife. According to Giovanni Villani, the Hungarian King, and his barons who went with him, all wore black over their armour ; and to animate the Hungarian soldiers, a black banner was always carried before them, on which was painted the figure of the unfortunate Andrea, hung by the neck, "which was a horrid thing to see!"* The Hungarians found Naples, as usual, an easy conquest. The young Queen, who had married Louis of Taranto, fled to Provence, where she fully exculpated herself of the horrid crime attributed to her before the Pope at Avignon. 1347.

Louis had returned to Hungary the year after he conquered Naples, and took sanguinary vengeance for his brother's murder. Joanna had re-appeared in her own states, and succeeded in wresting a great part of the kingdom from the Hungarians. The troops employed by both parties were chiefly Condottieri, or foreign mercenaries, who committed shocking atrocities. This year Louis, 1351.

* Lib. xii. cap. lviii. Script. Rer. Ital. vol. xiii. The reader will remember the standards on which the murders were depicted to animate the populace of Edinburgh after the dreadful catastrophe of the Kirk of Field. But indeed, as it has been often remarked, the histories of the beautiful Mary Queen of Scots, and of the no less beautiful Joanna of Naples, tally in almost every point.

A.D. 1351. who was returning to Naples, listened to terms of accommodation. Joanna's cause was again submitted to the Pope at Avignon, who again declared her innocent, and finally induced Louis to retire from the kingdom.

On the retreat of the Holy See from Rome, that degraded city fell into a frightful anarchy. The nobles, among whom the Colonna and the Orsini were the most conspicuous, carried on incessant wars with each other; and though we may utterly despise their ignoble feuds, we cannot think of the scenes of them without a deep and melancholy interest. "The Orsini had occupied the mole of Hadrian and the theatre of Pompey; the Colonna the Mausoleum of Augustus and the baths of Constantine. The Conti were in the Quirinal. The Frangipani had the Coliseum and the Septizonium of Severus, and the Janus of Forum Boarium, and a corner of the Palatine. The Savelli were at the tomb of Metella. The Corsi had fortified the capitol. If the churches were not spared, it is certain that Pagan monuments would be protected by no imaginary sanctity; and we find that the Corsi family had occupied the Basilica of St. Paul without the walls, and that the Pantheon was a fortress defended for the Pope." *

1354. Cola di Rienzi, the son of an innkeeper and washerwoman of Rome—the tribune, and the object of Petrarcha's enthusiastic admiration, had for a second time established a republican form of government among the Romans, and curbed the violent nobles; but his second administration was unpopular, and lasted but for a few months; and on the 8th of September of this year he terminated an extraordinary life by a pusillanimous death.

* Mr. Hobhouse's admirable historical illustrations of the 4th Canto of *Childe Harold*, p. 123.

"E così in breve tempo ebbero fine due aborti della fortuna, che diedero molto da ragionare di se in questi tempi, insegnando, che non è mestier d'ognuno il fondare de' principati con fidarsi dell' incoetanza de' popoli, e senza gran provvision di prudenza."—Muratori Annali. A.D.
1354.

To the woes of internal warfare Italy had now added the horrors of famine and pestilence. An appalling scarcity had manifested itself after the harvests of 1346; and two years later the plague was introduced from the Levant by some Genoese vessels. The impressive description of this tremendous scourge at Florence, with which Boccaccio opens his Decameron, may enable us to judge of the sufferings of the rest of Italy. Yet it is only during these awful visitations that Italian history is free from the madness of ambition and party: no sooner had the "great pestilence" ceased, than the usual afflictions of war and faction succeeded.

An obstinate war between Genoa and Venice, arising from some disputes relative to the commerce of the Black Sea, was closed this year, after the entire destruction of the Venetian fleet in the port of Sapienza, in the Morea. The same year witnessed the well-known tragedy of Marin Faliero, the Doge of Venice; and the progress in Lombardy and Tuscany of another emperor, (Charles IV.) who had crossed the Alps the preceding year, invited by many of the Italian states. His progress, however, was soon stopped, and (to give the so often repeated story of the emperors) he recrossed the Alps, followed by the general contempt and detestation of the Italians. 1355.

The year after the decapitation of Marin Faliero, the Venetians were involved in a dangerous and unfortunate war with the King of Hungary, who would not make peace until they renounced the sovereignty of Dalmatia. 1358.

A.D. . . . The Visconti, the tyrants of Milan, rendered themselves
1359. masters of Pavia.

1362. A war between Florence and Pisa, terminated in the ruin of the commerce and prosperity of the latter republic, which, having once aspired to the dominion of the waves of the Mediterranean, was humbled by the energetic Florentines, who had not an inch of maritime territory, and had prosecuted hostilities by hiring armed galleys in Provence, at Genoa and Naples.

It was during this war between Pisa and Florence, that Sir John Hawkwood and his English followers, who became by far the most distinguished of the condottieri, or foreign mercenaries, made their first appearance in Italy.

1364. A war was finished between the Visconti and the Church, when the latter consummated the subjection of the whole of Romagna, and restored for awhile peace to Lombardy.

1367. The seat of the popedom was restored to Rome by Urban V. a circumstance which Petrarca had long and earnestly prayed for.

1368. A league had been formed with the object of humbling the Visconti, between the Pope, the Emperor, the King of Hungary, and the Signiors of Padua, Ferrara, and Mantua ; in consequence of which, Charles IV. (the Emperor) again crossed the Alps. Sir John Hawkwood, now in the service of Milan, arrested the progress of the Imperialists by cutting the dikes of the Adige, and Bernabo Visconti bought off the Emperor, who negotiated a peace with the infamous tyrant and sent back the greater part of his army into Germany. The Emperor went into Tuscany, where he repeated the rapacity, meanness, and treachery of his former Italian visit. At Sienna, however, the people rose against him, killed or grievously wounded a thousand of his three thousand gens-d'armes, and compelled him to a disgraceful surrender at discretion. He sold to Lucca the

restoration of her ancient liberties, and the following year recrossed the Alps, having given the finishing blow to the dignity of the Imperial authority in Italy. A.D. 1368.

The Pope, Urban, formed another league against the powerful Visconti; but finding that it was unsuccessful, and that the tranquillity of Avignon was preferable to the troubles of Italy, he again transferred the Roman See to Provence. Two circumstances that accompanied this war are worth remembering:—When Bernabo Visconti received the Pope's declaration of hostilities in the shape of a Bull of excommunication, he made the two legates who brought it eat or swallow the Bull,—parchment, leaden seals, silk-strings and all; and Sir John Hawkwood, still in his service, inflicted a signal defeat upon the Florentine army at Cascina in Tuscany, and nearly succeeded in carrying Pisa by surprise. 1370.

The Visconti having imprudently discharged Sir John Hawkwood and his English, or “White company of Adventure,” that extraordinary man passed into the service of the Church, and carried fortune with him. 1374.

The death of Petrarca, under this year, is thus registered in a Paduan chronicle. “Et decessit postea anno Domini MCCCLXXIV. die XIX Julii, ætatis suæ LXX. Et ossa ejus clauduntur marmoreo saxo, & in Castro Arguadæ quiescant in Enganeis montibus.” Script. Rer. Ital. vol. viii.

The Pope's Legate, hoping to reduce the Republic, enfeebled by pestilence, death, and faction, to the Papal yoke, suddenly made war on Florence. In this service Sir John Hawkwood burned the harvests of the Florentines to increase the dearth, and committed other atrocious acts. Thus roused, the people of Florence leagued themselves with the Visconti, with Sienna, Lucca, Arezzo, and Pisa, and stirred up the Romagna to revolt against 1375.

A.D. 1375. the Church. The banner of the Florentine Republic, with the simple and emphatic motto of "LIBERTY," found friends everywhere in spite of a barbarous massacre at Forli, perpetrated by the furious English condottiero, in the idea of deterring the revolters.

The Pope (now Gregory XI.) sent a ferocious army of Bretons into Italy, where they committed (in Romagna) the most frightful excesses, massacring at Cesena alone, and under the encouraging eye of a cardinal legate, five thousand souls,—men, women, and children. Fortunately for the Florentines, they gained over Sir John Hawkwood to their service, and then prosecuted the war with activity and success.

1378. Gregory XI. had arrived at Rome from Avignon the preceding year. Bologna had detached itself from the hostile league under favourable conditions; but while the Tuscan republics, with Florence at their head, were treating for peace with the Pope, he died this year, and left the chair of St. Peter's to be the subject of unseemly contest.

The Romans insisting that the Popedom should no longer be given to foreigners, who would feel inclined to transfer it from Italy, but to a Roman, or at least to an Italian, Urban VI., a Neapolitan, was elected by a somewhat irregular conclave. Shortly after, the cardinals at Fondi annulled the election, and adjudged the tiara to the Cardinal of Geneva, who assumed the title of Clement VII. Hence arose the Great Schism of the West, which troubled and disgraced not only Italy, but nearly all Europe. This same year Florence was the scene of the insurrection of a democratical faction, that humbled the Guelf aristocracy, but nearly ruined the city and republic. The ruin was averted only by the patriotism of Michele di Lando, one of the mob. Florence however, for three years, was tyrannized by cruel demagogues, at the head of whom were Tomaso Strozzi and Giorgio Scali.

The Genoese, who attributed wars in which they were engaged in Tenedos, in Cyprus, and Liguria, to the jealousy of their rivals the Venetians, formed a powerful league against Venice. A.D. 1378.

The Venetian fleet was totally defeated by the Genoese, after which Peter Doria entered the lagunes of Venice, and uttered the well-known threat to put a rein upon the unbridled horses of St. Mark. But in her last extremity Venice was saved by skill and courage,—the Genoese were blocked up at Chiozza, and finally obliged to surrender to the Doge Contarini. 1379.

Venice, after a noble struggle, made peace with the League, losing, however, her recent acquisitions on the Italian continent. 1381.

Joanna Queen of Naples, for the fourth time a wife, with no surviving children to succeed her, had several times varied in the adoption of the prince to be her successor; but this year Charles of Durazzo seized the kingdom of Naples by force of arms, and had the unfortunate Queen strangled in prison with a silken cord, “Even,” say the chroniclers, “as her husband Andrea had been strangled at Aversa thirty-seven years before. 1382.

Bernabo Visconti was deposed, poisoned, and succeeded by Gian Galeazzo Visconti, as perfidious a villain as himself. 1385.

The English condottiero, Sir John Hawkwood, decidedly the best general of the age in Italy, died of sickness at an estate he had purchased near Florence. The Republic buried him with great honours in the cathedral, where his tomb is still seen surmounted by an equestrian statue. 1394.

Gian Galeazzo, from a sense of his own weakness, induced the Emperor, by the payment of 100,000 florins, to erect Milan into an Imperial duchy, and to bestow on him the investiture of it as a fief. The following year 1395.

A.D. the proud Genoa, worn out by revolutions, surrendered
1395. herself to the protection of Charles VI. of France.

1399. After long civil wars between the parties of Anjou and Durazzo, Ladislaus, the son of Charles III. was finally established on the throne of the Two Sicilies.

Though born in the preceding century, much of the writings of Dante must have belonged to this ; and besides the immortal Petrarca and Boccaccio, Italian literature was farther illustrated in the fourteenth century by Franco Sacchetti, Ser Giovanni, the historians Giovanni, Matteo, and Filippo Villani, by Passavanti, Agnolo Pandolfini, and others, who still remain (perhaps with too exclusive an admiration,) "Teste di Lingue" among the Italians.

The King's Nurse.

— “Perciocchè amava il suo Signore siccome madre.”

LIBRO DEL POLISTORE.

“I have given suck ; and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.”

SHAKSPEARE.



The King's Purse.

THE virtues of King Robert of Naples, of the line of the Angevins, might serve to cancel the memory of the crimes by which the sanguinary Charles I. his grandfather, had obtained possession of that splendid crown, and transmitted it to his descendants. A love of humanity and justice, an improved legislation, an unceasing attention to all that could civilize and comfort, endeared him to his subjects; and in his attachment to literature and its cultivators, whom he honoured and protected to the utmost of his ability, he had the fortunate glory of identifying himself with some of the undying effusions of Petrarca and Boccaccio, who, with many others of his literary cotemporaries, never tired of his praise, and of the commendations of his refined court, where

Fur le Muse nudrite a un tempo istesso,
Ed anco esercitate.

His only son, Charles, the Duke of Calabria, who had already exercised the difficult task of governing, gave every promise of prolonging the virtues of his sire and the golden age of Naples; but in the year 1328, and on the eve of Saint Martin's, he died prematurely at the capital, to the inexpressible grief of his unhappy father, and of all the kingdom; and with infinite tears he was buried in the church of Santa Chiara, the King lamenting, as he followed him to the tomb, "Alas! the crown is fallen from our head!"*

To aggravate this unexpected calamity, the virtuous Prince Charles left no son to succeed him—his surviving issue being two infant daughters, Joanna and Maria, to whom his widow soon added a posthumous daughter, also named Maria.

The tender-hearted and enlightened monarch, as soon as the first violence of his grief had subsided, devoted every attention to the health and education of the young Joanna, who was now to take his place on the throne of the countries he had rendered so happy; and as he felt the infirmities of age approaching, he contracted an alliance for her with the second son of his nephew the King of Hungary, who, by his descent from Charles Martel, Robert's

* Giannone, Angelo di Costanzo, &c.

elder brother, might have advanced pretensions to the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and troubled his grand-daughter Joanna's reign. His Majesty of Hungary, Caribert, brought himself the young spouse to Naples, where, in 1333, the marriage was celebrated with great pomp between the Hungarian Prince Andrea, and the Neapolitan Princess Joanna, neither of whom was more than seven years of age ! The King of Hungary, happy at having left a son so well provided for, with the certainty of succeeding to so opulent a kingdom, departed and returned to Hungary, leaving many of his Hungarians in the service of his son, who was already entitled Duke of Calabria, and, among others, he left in great authority an Hungarian monk, called Fra Roberto, or Friar Robert, who was charged to instruct the little Andrew in letters and politeness.*

But this premature marriage, which King Robert had resorted to with infinite prudence and forethought, as being the most likely means to secure the happiness and tranquillity of his grand-daughter and his subjects, became the source of a terrific tragedy, of long-enduring miseries to both ;† and

* *Storia Civile del Regno di Napoli*. "Che avesse da essere Maestro di lettere, e di creanza," are the quaint words of Giannone.

† "Auspiciously contrived as this union might seem to

Fra Roberto, whom Caribert had left to form the mind of the young Andrea, to guide and protect him, became the instrument of that prince's ruin and early death.

Even during his lifetime, King Robert is reported by some of the Italian historians to have regretted the marriage, seeing that Andrea, though brought up in his civilized court, "academy, and domicile of every virtue and accomplishment," did not abandon the barbarous customs of the Hungarians, nor seek the society of the more refined Italians and courtiers, but associated solely with the Hungarians his father had left, and with others of the same uncultivated nation, who came from time to time to seek their fortunes at Naples. His regret may have been increased by the compassion he felt for his beautiful young grand-daughter, who, accomplished and full of wit, would have to pass her days with one so uncivilized in his tastes—stupid and indolent. The characters of the young husband and young wife, as indeed nearly every point of their strange history, have been differently represented, and made the subjects of doubt and discussion; but

silence a subsisting claim upon the kingdom, it proved eventually the source of civil war and calamity for an hundred and fifty years."—Hallam's *Middle Ages*, ch. iii. part 2.

that something like the feelings attributed to him here, existed in the mind of King Robert, strengthened apparently by his apprehensions of the Hungarians' arrogating to themselves an undue part in the government of the kingdom when he should be no more, seems proved by the fact, admitted on all sides, that on the approach of death he summoned a general parliament of all the barons of the kingdom, and the sindaci of the royal cities, and took their oath of allegiance to Joanna *alone* as Queen, stipulating that they should establish a council, dependent entirely on her, whilst her husband Andreas should only obtain the title of Queen's consort.

But scarcely had the tomb closed over the wise and lamented sovereign, than all his prudent regulations were set at nought by a powerful faction; and his subjects, in the words of the old historian, Angelo Costanzo, comparing his admirable government to the misrule which followed, felt the difference there is between day and night. The Hungarians, headed by the astute Friar Robert, who, under a monk's hood, and outward humility, and squalidness, hid an ambition which could not content itself save with the power that belongs to a crown, possessed themselves by degrees of the government of the kingdom, expelling, one by one, all

the faithful and prudent ministers of the late King Robert, and administering every thing after their own will and caprice, leaving to Joanna, who was only sixteen years of age, and in fact the prisoner of these uncultivated men, the name of a queen indeed, but nothing more. The high-minded Princess was, moreover, afflicted by seeing the thoughtlessness or imbecility of her husband, who was not less than herself subjected to the Hungarians. Expelled from power, and even from the court, the faithful and attached ministers of her grandfather could neither counsel her inexperience nor console her in her sufferings; and the flower of the Neapolitan knights, that had given such lustre to the royal Halls during the preceding reign, despairing of the unwarlike, slothful Andrea, and disgusted with his Hungarians, withdrew from the kingdom to join Robert Prince of Taranto, who cherished the project of conquering Greece, and Thrace, and Constantinople.

It was at this unhappy conjuncture that the all-accomplished Petrarca arrived at Naples on a high mission from the Pope at Avignon; and in his letters, through the exaggeration of oratory, to which he was somewhat too much addicted in his correspondence, we may trace an odious and true

picture. The poet had frequented and honoured with his most glowing eulogiums the refined court of King Robert, who appointed him his domestic chaplain and almoner; an office never allotted but to persons of the highest distinction, and to which sundry important privileges were attached. With the past fresh in his recollection, he contrasts the present, and mourns over the fate of the young Queen,—over the condition of Naples generally, now oppressed by a monk, whom he thus describes:—

“A horrible animal, with bald head and bare feet, short in stature, swollen in person, with worn-out rags, torn studiously to show his naked skin; who not only despises the supplications of the citizens of Naples, but, from the vantage ground of his feigned sanctity, treats with scorn the embassy of the Pope. Yet this is not marvellous, because his pride is founded on the treasures he accumulates; for, from what is reported, it appears that his caskets full of gold do not accord with the rags he wears. * * * Is he a fit successor to such a monarch as the wise and good King Robert, who, more depraved than Dionysius, Phalaris, and Agathocles, has remained to govern the Court of Naples, but with a new and marvellous species of

tyranny? He wears nor crown, nor brocade, nor silk; but, with a squalid mantle, filthy and torn, which covers but half his swollen body, and with a crouching gait, bent not by age but hypocrisy, he rules with unutterable arrogance and tyranny the court of the Queen; oppresses the weak, treads justice under foot, confounds all things human and divine; and, like a new *Palinurus* or *Tiphys*, sits at the helm of this great vessel, which, from what I can discern, will quickly go to the bottom."

While the sensitive lover of Laura was thus lamenting at Naples the changes which had taken place, sympathizing in vain with the lovely young Queen, and foretelling a moral tempest, he was witness to a physical one of the most tremendous nature. As it would be impertinent to attempt what he has described, and as his description has all the interest an eye-witness can give, his words are again quoted from a letter he addressed the day after the event to his friend the Cardinal Colonna.*

"This visitation from Heaven was foretold, several days before its occurrence, by the bishop of a little neighbouring island, who rested his prediction

* I have availed myself of the translation used by the late *Ugo Foscolo* in his admirable essay on *Petrarca*.

on certain astronomical calculations : but, as it rarely happens that prophets penetrate the whole truth of any future event ; so he unluckily announced, as the completion of the catastrophe, ‘ that a terrible earthquake would ensue, by which Naples itself would be destroyed on the 25th of November.’

“ This advertisement obtained so much credit, that the greater part of the inhabitants actually gave up every other consideration to the grand concerns of religion ; imploring the mercy of God, and his forgiveness of their past offences, as if the following day were infallibly to be their last.

“ On the other hand, many laughed at the idle prediction, observing how little faith was due to astrologers ; the more especially as only a few days had passed since the last earthquake. In the midst of these apprehensions and encouragements, (of which the former, however, predominated,) I retired on the evening of the 24th, just before sunset, to my apartment, and in my way thither met almost all the females of the city (in whom the sense of shame had been swallowed up by that of danger) barefooted, and with hair dishevelled, crowding to the churches, with their babes in their arms, crying and imploring God for mercy. As night came on, the sky was more than usually serene. My

servants went to bed immediately after supper. For my own part, I proposed to stay up and watch the setting of the moon, at that time (I think) in her first quarter. The window which looks to the west was left open, and I saw her, as about midnight she hid herself behind St. Martin's Mount, her face much darkened, and partially covered by clouds. I then closed the window, and stretched myself on my bed, where, after lying for some time awake, I was fast falling asleep, when I was roused by the noise of an earthquake. The casement was burst open,—the light which I always keep burning in my chamber was extinguished, and the whole house shook to its very foundations.

“In this state, between sleeping and waking, and assailed by the terror of impending destruction, I ran to the cloisters of the monastery in which I reside, and where we groped about in the dark, (having only the glimmering of one dull lamp to direct us,) to receive and administer whatever consolation was in our power. Here we were shortly met by the abbot—a very pious man—with his monks in procession, who, terrified by the tempest, were bearing the holy cross and reliques of saints, and preceded by lighted torches, with devout prayers and exclamations, in their way to the

church to sing matins to the Virgin. This having inspired me with courage, I accompanied them to the church, where we all, with one accord, threw ourselves prostrate on the ground, and did nothing else but with loud uplifted voices implore the divine mercy and forgiveness; expecting every minute the sacred building to fall and bury us in the ruins."

"It would be much too long to recount all the horrors of that infernal night; and although the truth very far exceeds all power of description, yet I fear to be thought guilty of exaggeration when I exclaim, What deluges of water! what wind! what thunder! what terrible rumbling in the heavens! what fearful tremblings of the earth! what vehement commotion in the sea! what shrieks of amazed and distracted multitudes! The long night seemed extended by magic art to twice its actual duration; and when morning came, its approach was announced to us rather by the clock, than by any corresponding light in the firmament. The priests robed themselves for the celebration of mass; while we, not having courage to lift our faces to heaven, remained stretched on the ground in prayer and supplication. Though day had broke, it was still as dark as night. The multitudes in

the upper part of the city had begun to disperse ; but towards the sea-shore the noise seemed to increase, and the clattering of horses was heard in the street below. What this could mean it was impossible to ascertain ; but, made bold by despair, I at last mounted on horseback myself, resolved to see, even though I should perish.

“Great God ! who ever heard of such things as I then beheld ? The oldest seamen declared that the like was never witnessed. In the midst of the port were seen an infinite number of poor wretches scattered about on the sea, and struggling to gain the shore, who, by the violence and fury of the waves, were battered about till they looked like so many eggs dashed to pieces on the beach. The whole space was filled with drowned and half-drowned bodies ; some with their skulls fractured, others with broken arms or legs, others with their bowels gushing out ; and the screams of men and women who lived near the beach were no less terrific than the uproar of the elements. The very sands, on which the day before you walked in ease and safety, were become more dangerous than the Faro of Messina, or the whirlpool of Charybdis. A thousand or more of the Neapolitan nobility came to the shore on horseback, as if to solemnize the

funeral obsequies of their country; and when I found myself among them, I began to be of better cheer, seeing that if I were doomed to perish, I should die with the honour of knighthood. Soon the dreadful rumour came to our ears, that the ground on which we trod had been undermined by the sea, and was beginning to open. We fled precipitately and saved ourselves; but the spectacle we then beheld was the most terrible ever witnessed by mortal eye: the heavens so commingled! the sea so implacably turbulent! the waves mountain high, and in colour neither black nor blue, as in more ordinary tempests, but perfectly white, like hills of snow, rolling over the whole expanse from Capri to Naples.

“The young Queen, barefooted, and attended by a numerous train of females, went to visit the churches dedicated to the blessed Virgin. No vessel in the harbour was capable of resisting the violence of the gale; and three galleys which had arrived from Cyprus, and were to depart that morning, were seen by sympathizing thousands to go down without a soul being saved. Three other large ships, which had anchored in the port, struck against each other and sunk, and all on board perished. Of all the vessels, one only escaped; on

board of which were no less than four hundred galley-slaves, who had been engaged in the Sicilian war; by the strength of these malefactors alone, the ship being enabled to stem the fury of the overwhelming element; and even they were quite exhausted, when, at the approach of night, beyond all hope, and contrary to the universal expectation, the sky cleared, the wind abated, and the sea grew calm. Thus the most infamous of the sufferers are those alone who escaped a watery grave. Alas! that the words of Lucan should have thus proved true!—‘that fortune favours the wicked;’—or that such is the pleasure of God; or that they, who in the hour of trial are most indifferent whether they live or die, are the securest from danger! This is the history of yesterday.”—Nov. 27, 1343.

This tremendous tempest produced the following circumstances. The court of Queen Joanna and Andrea were at Naples the night when the storm commenced, and safe within the strong and high walls of the Castel-nuovo; but many of the domestics, or persons who held inferior offices about the royal personages, were lodged in detached apartments below the castle, and close to the shores of the bay, where, on the sudden rise of the sea, which had not been anticipated from the predic-

tions of an earthquake, they were exposed to the greatest peril. Among these latter was the foster-sister of the King, Isoldina, an Hungarian maiden, the daughter of Isolda, Andrea's nurse, who had come with him from his native country and never left him. Buried in the sound, deep sleep of youth and innocence, the fair Hungarian was not aroused by the lashing of the waves, which made the low-lier tenements rock from their foundations ; even when the rest of the lodgers all ran shrieking from the inundated spot, she still slept on ; nor was it until part of the buildings had been washed away, and her fond mother, who had hurried to the place of danger, had shrieked for some time the name of Isoldina, that she appeared at one of the windows, and became sensible of her perilous situation.

By this time she was completely isolated in the midst of a foaming, frothing sea, that threatened every moment to swallow up the tottering house. She screamed for aid ; but the horror of the scene was such, and such the general panic, that all had fled into the castle, or up the heights that ascend from the shores of the bay ; and none heeded her save her mother, who stood on the edge of a wall, which also trembled under the rapid and violent percussion of the invading sea. With her arms

wildly stretched towards her daughter, whom she could not save—for whom she could do nothing—the King's nurse shrieked most loudly, but her voice was swallowed up by the roaring winds and waves, and the groans of the labouring walls, or the dash and crack of the fallen fragments that were hurled hither and thither with astounding confusion.

At this moment of exquisite maternal agony, when she expected each coming wave would sweep away her daughter, who was still at the window with clasped hands, and eyes upturned to heaven,—and when neither mother nor child saw any hope of succour on earth, a young man—a squire of the Count Giacomo Capanno, the grand marshal of the kingdom,—rushed to the dreadful spot. This youth, who had seen and admired the fair Hungarian about the palace, and who had continued his admiration, though her mother, from strong national prejudices, and dislike and distrust of the Italians, among whom her curious fortune had sent her to reside, had opposed his addresses,—on hearing of the disastrous situation of Isoldina from one of her fugitive fellow-lodgers, had come with love's heroism and devotion to save or to sacrifice himself. He had induced a porter of the palace to accompany him to the scene of danger, and had prudently

provided himself with a coil of rope, and a strong staff. As the almost frantic mother saw his preparations and determination, she exclaimed, "Oh ! Gaetano! save but my Isoldina—my child, and she is thine!"

Such an assurance might well increase the boldness, of which to its utmost stretch he stood in need, for the sea roared and foamed like the gulf beneath a cataract, and masses of building and timber were thrown about with terrific violence in the space that intervened between him and the maiden, and seemed to threaten certain destruction to any body who should venture among them, even if he could escape being broken to pieces against the walls by the dashing waves. But with a passionate glance to the young object of his love, whose pale face and bosom and long naked arms he could see through the blackness of the storm and night, and with a brief prayer to the Madonna for aid and strength, having attached the cord round his waist, and given its other extremity to the hands of the matron and the porter, and grasping his staff, he descended from the wall into the dread turmoil of the waters. Scarcely had the bold youth advanced a sabre's length from the foot of the wall, when a coming wave threw him

back and bruised him violently against the hard stones and brick; and three other attempts he made were equally unsuccessful, but did not daunt his spirit. When about to be crushed by a heavy beam that was tossed on the angry element, as though it had been a straw, he contrived to evade the percussion, and to attach himself to the timber; a reflux followed, and he was carried with the beam to the half-submerged tenement, whence in the next minute he was seen supporting the terrified Isoldina. Having again grasped the piece of timber, he took advantage of another wave that came on in mountainous height, and, using all his strength to retain his hold of that mass and of the maiden, he was washed against the wall, where the mother and the porter, by drawing in the rope, could now render some assistance. As Isoldina grasped the cord, Gaetano, with his staff, kept off, as best he could, the fragments that were dashing about; and though he himself received several severe bruises from them, he had the satisfaction of seeing the fair Hungarian reach the top of the wall, without having sustained any serious injury. He was then drawn up himself, and the midnight party, after a rapture of joy, hastened to a place of safety, thanking Heaven for the

miraculous preservation. As they hurried on, and ere they gained the inner enclosure of Castelnovo, a tremendous dash and rumble struck their ears, and on turning round they saw the wall on which they had been standing, breaking to pieces; — of the house whence Isoldina had escaped no trace remained; the hungry sea had swallowed it.

The gallant squire, of a certainty, deserved the bride he saved; and if the mother felt this in spite of her inveterate dislike to the Italians, and remembered her promise made in the hour of need and despair, it may be imagined that Gaetano, who was not all indifferent to Isoldina before he became her preserver, should now receive the maiden's love with her gratitude. Still, however, there were circumstances that prevented their union; and as with the lapse of time the recollection of the danger grew less vivid, the Hungarian mother's gratitude somewhat cooled, whilst her prejudices revived, and she constantly raised obstacles to her daughter's marriage, until she again stood in need of the brave Neapolitan's services, and that in a matter as near and as dear to her as her child's preservation.

The Hungarians, whom the Italians accused of brutality and ferocity, from the first moment of

their coming among them, suspected the Italians of guile and dark treachery. This diffidence was general, but in no breast was it so strong as in that of the thoughtless Andrea's nurse, who loved the child she had suckled as much as if she had given him birth. Her suspicion being thus ever excited, induced a prying curiosity as to all that passed in the court and city of Naples, and a vigilance that never slept. For some time past, the nurse heard vague rumours of plots and general discontent, and her fears of the barons of the kingdom were now aggravated by the scowls she saw on their brows,—their murmured intolerance of the monk Robert, that they could not always suppress,—and by the whole state of affairs and feelings in the capital. She knew that something fatal, something that might compromise the liberty, or perhaps the life, of her imprudent young Prince was brooding; and she knew also that the Grand Marshal Giacomo Capanno, in whose service, as squire, the enamoured Gaetano still continued, was one of the most disaffected of the Neapolitan nobles, and a man, from his fiery passions, most likely to carry matters to a sanguinary extremity. Something also had reached Isoldina's ever eager ear, of nocturnal meetings held by that powerful baron,

not only in his own castle in the Apennines, but at the city of Capua, and even at Naples; and though no word of what passed in those secret conclaves could ever be obtained, she was well aware that all those who were named to her as having attended them were most inimical to Andrea and the Hungarians.

The young Prince she had often warned, but with habitual indolence and thoughtlessness he disregarded what she said, or soon forgot it over his wine-cup, which he already drained with the devotion of a veteran toper; and she dreaded to impart her suspicions to friar Robert, lest his violence and cruelty should hasten and aggravate the catastrophe. But now she thought she could obtain the certain information of what she surmised, perhaps obviate the crisis, through the medium of the squire Gaetano. She therefore imparted to him her suspicions of his master, and his master's friends, and proposed, as a condition of his marriage with her daughter, that he should keep an eye on all the Grand Marshal's proceedings, and report them to her.

Absorbed with love, as was the brave youth, he could not however forget the principles inculcated in him in his education as squire, nor contemplate,

without loathing, the character of a domestic spy—a traitor to his master; but when the nurse vowed that otherwise he never should wed Isol-dina; that she would instantly conclude a marriage for her with an Hungarian about the court, he took a solemn oath to pry and to listen at the very first rendezvous the Grand Marshal should give his friends or adherents, and if he learned aught that regarded the life or safety of the young King—for he would not bind himself to report any other matter,—to warn the nurse immediately.

This opportunity soon occurred; for, a few days after he had bound himself to win his bride by farther services, as he was loitering with the fair Hungarian, he was summoned to attend the Grand Marshal, who was about to leave the palace for his mountain castle. He took a hasty and a fond farewell; the nurse saying as he went, “Remember, Gaetano! remember your oath!”

But the recollection of that solemn vow, and of the dubious duties it implied, was never out of the squire’s mind, and made him uneasy and uncomfortable in the presence of his master, who, a tyrant to others, had ever been kind to him, and whom he had hitherto served with loving faithfulness. As he rode after the Marshal, he

mused, "By the mass! and it is only love could make me stoop for a moment to such dishonour! I, the Baron's squire, to become the spy of his words and actions! Such a disgrace must never be heard in chivalry, or I shall never put a knight's spur to my boot!—and yet, if I do it not, Isoldina will never be mine! Oh, love! love!—but one thing however consoles me: the plot may only exist in the nurse's fertile brain, and I shall have no secrets to betray! Still, I must do a spy's functions; I must become an eavesdropper—a prying listener; and this is odious! Oh! Isoldina, too fair Hungarian! I would rather plunge again for thee into the raging waves, as when I saved thee from death!—I would ten times rather win thee by deadly combat with a rival, than thus!—But, cost it what it will, mine thou must be, and mine oath must be kept!"

The Castle of Count Giacomo Capanno, which was situated in the deep gorge of the mountains, through which runs the road from Naples to Salerno, did not long detain the Marshal and his squire. On the night of their arrival, the Count of Tralizzo, and some powerful barons from Apulia, joined Count Giacomo. They did not retire to secret consultation, nor let any thing escape them

that the attentive squire could take hold of, though he fancied their countenances were agitated, and their persons restless, like men on the eve of some important enterprise. This, however, might be but fancy, naturally enough proceeding in him from the nurse's suspicions, and he could glean nothing from the squires who accompanied the knights to confirm his apprehensions or remove them.

At an early hour on the following morning the Grand Marshal, with his guests and his squire Gaetano, set out from the castle. They pursued the road to Naples, and the squire had begun to think they were returning to the court, when, on approaching the end of the bay, he saw his master point to a little castle on an islet but a few paces from the shore, and exclaiming, "Tralizzo, they are before us—we must not make them wait!" spur his horse and gallop in that direction, followed by the other nobles.

The miniature fortress lay nearly opposite to the interred city of Pompei, at the roots of Mount Vesuvius, the emptied lava of which, indeed, formed the narrow islet on which it stood; the beautifully curving shores of the bay, the glassy sea, and the grand mountains which rose in the rear of the volcano, or nearer at hand behind Stabia and Cas-

tellamare, formed a lovely and tranquillizing picture, whose effect Gaetano could not help feeling, preoccupied as he was, when he embarked with his master and his guests in a boat which presently wafted them to the islet.*

At the gate of the fortress there was an assemblage of nobles waiting their arrival with evident impatience. As he approached, the squire recognized the Count Carlo d'Artugio, a natural son of the late King Robert, Beltrame, the son of the said Count Carlo, the two lords of Lionessa, Tommaso and Masolo, sons of Messer Pace da Bologna, and Chamberlains to Andrea, Caffarello, the son of Messer Caraffa, Messer Raimondo da Napoli, the Count Marcone, accompanied by his wife, Dama Zanza, and some others.† He already knew that these individuals were among those the most decidedly inimical to the young King, the monk Robert, and the Hungarian faction; and though he could not yet conceive the extent and atrocity of their hatred, he felt it was not for a trifle they had all thus assembled in so silent and secret a place.

* This little island and fortress still form beautiful features in the view from the ancient walls of Pompeii, or from Castellamare, on the opposite side of the bay.

† Il Libro di Polistore.

After the usual salutations, which they delivered hastily, as men who had weightier matters on their minds than formal courtesy, the nobles entered the castle and retired at once to an apartment, the door of which they closed after them, leaving their squires, some of whom had stayed on the shore of the bay with the horses, to amuse themselves as they chose during their deliberations.

“Now is the moment to keep my oath and to win my bride!” said Gaetano, as he slunk away from his fellows, who had chosen the very rational and absorbing amusement of eating and drinking, and gossiping with the old Chatelain of the fortress, and who seemed laudably indifferent to the mysteries of this meeting, or the secret their lords might have to impart to each other. The lover-spy reached a narrow, gloomy corridor, into which opened the door of the chamber the barons occupied; and there he stayed and listened, without his absence being noticed by the squires, or any one else. The very first words that struck his ear, were words of death, and it was his master who pronounced them.

“I tell ye,” said the Grand Marshal, “that his death, and nothing but his death, can save us! The Monk Robert has penetrated our secret and

our disaffection ; and the drunken, savage Andreasso,* to show us the mercy we are to expect, has had painted a log and an axe† above his royal arms, and has even named over the wine-cup the first victims he will sacrifice !”

“Yes ! I have heard I was among the number,” said the Count of Tralizzo ; “and you, Beltrame, and you, Count Carlo, and —

“All—all are destined to the axe !” said the voice of the lady Zanza ; “and if they should spare the life of her Majesty, my mistress, it is more than I could expect.”

“Whatever we do must be done at once !” said another voice ; “we have borne the insolence and oppression of these rude Hungarians too long already ; and now the Pope’s ambassadors are on the way with the Bull for Andreasso’s coronation !”

“The Queen will be crowned with him,” rejoined another of the conspirators ; “but the drunkard, or rather the dirty monk, pretends to reign alone ; the fair Joanna will be a closer prisoner, and more their slave than ever.”

“If they let my royal mistress live,” interrupted

* The very expressive, contemptuous diminutive by which the unfortunate Andrea was always called by the Italians.

† Dominici de Gravina, Chron. Rer. Apul.

the lady; "but again, I say, I fear she will be one of their first victims!"

"We must be beforehand with them—we must save our beautiful young Queen, by striking the blow at once!" cried the Grand Marshal.

"But when the blow is struck," said another voice rather diffidently, "what will be our means of defence and justification?—there is an Hungarian party in the kingdom—we may fall before them, or be sacrificed to the first impulse of popular horror at such a murder!"

"Call not a deed of self-preservation by so foul a name!" retorted the Marshal angrily; "I tell ye all, we must kill Andreasso, or he will kill us! There may be some to prefer the drunkard's life to their own, and the continuance of the degradation of these kingdoms, to a better order of things; but I am not one of their number: what say'st thou, Count Marcone?"

"We have no other alternative than his death!" said an assenting voice.

"And when it is over," said another speaker, whom the listening squire knew to be the Count Carlo d'Artugio, the late King's natural son, "we have friends to rally round us and assert the inalienable rights of Queen Joanna;—there is more than

one royal Prince—" Here his voice dropped, and the squire could only catch the names of Luigi di Taranto, her cousin, and of some other near relations of her Majesty.

"But how will the Queen herself feel towards those who have slain her husband?" inquired the same diffident voice that had spoken once before.

"Listen, Messer Masolo!" said Dama Zanza; "as a woman, I may deliver an opinion on this head, and affirm that the grief of a beautiful and refined princess at the loss of a drunken, stupid husband like Andreasso is not likely to be very vehement, and—" Here her voice also was lowered, and at the most interesting point; and the squire could only catch the name of Philippa la Catanese, an extraordinary woman, who, from the condition of a washerwoman in Sicily, had risen to be the favourite of the late King Robert, and was now the titled confidant of the young Queen; and the names of some other ladies, and of some attendants about the person of Joanna.

The next person who spoke was the Grand Marshal of the kingdom.

"We have gone too far to retract now," said he; "the time for deliberation is past; Andreasso must die this very night! I swear by this holy wafer of

the mass I have brought hither in my bosom for the purpose, to do my part! let all present repeat my oath!"

Gaetano stayed to hear the dreadful vow pronounced by a number of voices, and then rushed horror-struck from the corridor. For some minutes his brain was confused, and he knew not what to do, or what was passing around him, but recovering himself he determined to hasten to Naples, to fulfil his oath with the King's nurse,—to save, if possible, the King's life, which his generous and humane disposition would have induced him to attempt, even had he never been bound to Isoldina. He ran to the boat, rowed himself from the accursed islet to terra-firma, and telling the squires on the shore, he was going on hasty and sudden business for his master, he mounted his horse and galloped towards Naples.

He rode with tremendous speed: the agitation of his mind prevented his attending to the road, which was none of the best, and as he was crossing some rough lava that lay at the foot of Mount Vesuvius, his gallant but overwrought steed fell under him, and he was thrown with such violence that he was for some time deprived of his senses.

In this state Gaetano was found by some pea-

sants, who carried him to the Torre del Greco, in those days a small village. When he recovered his senses, he found himself so severely bruised and weakened by loss of blood, which flowed from a cut he received on his head from the hard lava, that he could not continue his journey, nor for some time even stand on his feet. His very anxiety to reach the capital and deliver the horrid secret he had obtained, perhaps added to the giddiness of his head and his inability of doing so. His message could not be trusted to a third person. The condition of the young man was every way distressing; and when he mounted his horse, which he could not do at all till near the time of sunset, he was so debilitated and giddy, that he was obliged to grasp the high pommel of his saddle, and to ride on at a slow pace. He had not more than five or six English miles to go, but at the rate he went, and from being frequently obliged to stop, he was a long while in performing them, and did not reach the city of Naples until long after the gates were closed for the night. Being well known to the guards as a person about the court, and attached to one of the greatest officers of the kingdom, he readily induced them to go and obtain their captain's permission to open the gate; but this produced

another delay, and altogether he did not arrive at the Castel-nuovo until the third hour of the night. When there, he learned to his utter dismay, that the King and Queen and their court had gone to Aversa at an early hour that same morning !

What was to be done now? Isolda the nurse always accompanied the King, nor was there a single person of the court left at the Castel-nuovo, to whom he could venture to declare the horrid conspiracy ; not one of whose sentiments he could be sufficiently sure, to know, that in betraying his noble master, he should not speak to his master's fellow-conspirator, or one, at least, who would wish success to the enterprise against the King and the Hungarians, and at once sacrifice him for his interference. Friar Robert was indeed in the city, but shut up in a strong palace, as in a fortress, with a set of brawling, drunken Hungarians. Any access to him at that hour, and by an Italian, was very dubious ; Gaetano dreaded besides his cruel implacable character, and though he would save the King's life, a lingering attachment to his countrymen as opposed to the Hungarians, or a sense of the chivalrous faith due to his knight, made him anxious to do so without directly sacrificing his master ; or he felt that he would prevent the

murder of one, without entailing the certain death of many, whom the vindictive monk would not fail to sacrifice, and that too in the cruellest and most horrid manner. But while he was lost in agonizing deliberation, the deed might be done ! The Grand Marshal had fixed that very night for the murder of the King ; and it was certain the conspirators must have better information as to the royal movements than he had possessed. Could he but reach Aversa before them and warn the nurse, the royal residence might be put in a state of defence, the person of the King secured, and the conspirators, seeing themselves discovered, might seek safety in timely flight, and he might gain his bride without the torture and death of his master ! But Aversa was six miles distant, and both himself and his steed were wounded and exhausted ; yet had they been fresh as for a race, it would have been of no avail ; for, when Gaetano presented himself at the Capuan gate, which opened on the road to Aversa, with the fatality that had attended him all this day, he found it guarded by a company of Hungarians, who positively refused him egress at that late hour, and, on his insisting with violence, placed him under arrest.

Meanwhile the conspirators, having finished their

deliberations, about two hours after noon, left the little castle at the end of the bay, and took the nearest road to Aversa by the roots of Mount Vesuvius. To men bent, like them, on deeds of secrecy and blood, every trifling event excites suspicion and alarm; and though they could not conceive that the Grand Marshal's squire was in possession of their secret, or, being in possession of it, would dare to disclose it to living being, or betray his master, the intelligence of his extraordinary evasion made them hurry on their journey, and feel uneasy until they reached Aversa, and found every thing quiet and as they wished.

They had entered the little Norman town* by different gates, and now to avoid remark, repaired in separate parties of twos or threes, and at short intervals of time, to the royal residence, where their offices and rank gave them free access at all hours. The conspirators themselves had induced the young King and Queen to go to Aversa, as for a holiday, for they would have found the execution of their plot difficult at Naples, where Andreasso was habitually surrounded by so many guards and friends; and their unsuspecting, thoughtless victim

* The Norman origin of Aversa will be found in the tale of "The Norman Pilgrims," Vol. I.

now received them with smiles, and promised them a jovial *villeggiatura*, with hunting and hawking, dancing and banqueting.

After they had made certain arrangements in the castle, where they had many accomplices, the conspirators arranged their toilettes, and went to pay their respects to their young and lovely queen, who was breathing the cool evening air in the delicious gardens of a Celestine monastery adjoining the abode of royalty.

Happy at being relieved from the surveillance and odious presence of the monk Robert ; happy with the thoughts of the splendour and festivity of her approaching coronation ; happier still at the heart-filling, tender prospect of being soon a mother, Joanna's beauties had at that moment all their *éclat* and animation, with a touching expression calculated to win every heart. Like Mary Queen of Scots, to whose adventures and character her own have been so frequently compared, Joanna possessed charms the most calculated to impress the imagination with enduring pictures, which have been sighed over even by those "who have felt themselves compelled to believe all or much of what her enemies laid to her charge." And her painted portraits, though executed in the

infancy of art, haunt the mind even like Mary Stewart's, whose countenance, to use again the language of Scott, "is as familiar to us as the mistress of youth, or the favourite daughter of advanced age." Brantome, the passionate admirer of every princess of French extraction, goes even beyond his wonted enthusiasm when he speaks of Joanna I. of Naples, whose beauty, he maintains, far exceeded that of Petrarca's Laura. "Her portrait, which is still to be seen," says he, "shows that she was more angelic than human. I saw it at Naples in a number of places, where it is treasured with the greatest care. Certainly this was a beautiful princess, whose countenance displayed great sweetness with a beautiful majesty. This fine portrait represents her as *all beauty, sweetness, and true majesty*." To the animated personal charms of the original must be added the qualities of elegance, wit and genius, and the sweetness of a voice that could not be heard without tender emotion. Whatever might be the regret of the high-minded Princess at her husband's dissipation, indolence, and levity, she does not appear to have regarded him with other than kind sentiments; and now, on the very eve of the murder of which she was to be accused, she loitered affectionately

on his arm through the acacia-groves of the Celestine garden, and, at separating, goodnaturedly admonished him not to commit excesses in the banqueting hall, but to retire betimes, and on the morrow-morning they would fly their hawks together in the old woods of Atella.

The young King was more than usually gay at the evening board; he drank to his approaching coronation, and the conspirators echoed his toast with the rest; but in Andreasso intemperance was already an inveterate habit, and he remained carousing with his Hungarians long after the Grand Marshal, the Seneschal, and the other nobles, who, from the more sober habits of the Italians, did not excite any surprise by their early retreat, had left the banqueting hall to prepare the last scene of the tragedy.

Hour passed after hour, each of them seeming an age to the anxious conspirators; but still the clatter of the wine-cups, the unmeaning witticism in unintelligible Hungarian, the roaring laugh, and chorused song, were heard from the hall.

"Will the drunkard feast all night?" whispered Tommaso and Masolo da Bologna, his chamberlains, who had engaged to open his chamber door to the murderers,—“will he *never* come?”

But staggering from the wine he had swallowed, and singing a bacchanalian catch, the victim came at length. The next moment, and as the monks were chaunting their midnight service in the contiguous monastery, the conspirators glided along the corridor, and took their post near the door of his apartment. The corridor was open on one side, and afforded a view of the quiet alleys, flowered parterres, and waving trees of a garden, all sleeping placidly in the rays of the moon, whose lovely serene face ought to have inspired pure, peaceful, and holy feelings. But the voice, or the apparition of an angel from Heaven, would hardly have stayed those desperate men in the execution of their hellish design.

In a few minutes Masolo da Bologna came out from Andreasso's apartment to the corridor. "All is right," whispered he : "the sot has not gone into the Queen's chamber, drunk as he is, but has betaken himself to a couch in an outer room!"

"Then let us finish our work at once," said Beltrame.

"First let us see whether all is quiet!" whispered the Chamberlain, and he went along the corridor, and down-stairs to the banqueting-hall to listen.

“Not a soul is moving save ourselves ; the Hungarians are buried in wine and sleep, and snoring like hogs,” said Masolo returning ; and he leading the way, the Count of Tralizzo and Beltrame rushed into the King’s apartment. The noise of their steps aroused Andreasso ; and wondering what such an intrusion could mean, he rose and went to meet them. Then Beltrame seized him by the hair of the head, which he wore very long, and endeavoured with all his force to throw him to the ground.

“This is but a dirty game, and foul play !”* cried the King, whose head was confused with drink, and he seized with his teeth the hand of Beltrame, which he never let go until he bit off all he had seized with his teeth.†

The Count of Tralizzo then threw a rope with a sliding knot round Andreasso’s neck, and he pulling with all his force at one end of the rope, and Beltrame at the other, they did not stop until King Andreasso fell strangled and dead in the midst of the traitors.

“’Tis done ! ’tis soon over !” said the Chamberlain Tommaso da Bologna, in a horrid whisper,

* Questo è un sozzo giuoco.—Polistore. † Id.

after having stooped down and looked at the blackened face, and felt the heart of the ill-fated Prince ;
“ but where shall we dispose of the sot’s carcase ? ”

“ What matters it ? ” said the implacable Grand Marshal ; “ ’tis as well here as elsewhere : he will only look as if he had been choaked in his wine ! ”

“ Not so ! in the condition our young Queen is in, the sudden sight of her dead husband might be fatal to her :—we must carry him hence ! ” said the Count of Tralizzo.

“ Ay ! but whither ?—but whither ? ” inquired several of the conspirators in the same breath.

“ Let us bury him in the deserted stable at the foot of the castle ! ” said the Chamberlain, Masolo da Bologna.

“ Let us throw him into the garden as if he had fallen over from the corridor and broken his neck ! ” said the Count of Tralizzo.

“ That deep mark round his neck will tell another tale ! ” said another of the murderers, now shuddering as he held down a lamp and saw the narrow purple line, the only and insignificant sign of the dread violence that had slain a king.

“ It matters not what tale is told, ” said the Grand Marshal : “ the deed is done, and we the doers must not be caught here just yet :—but who

hoped for secrecy? Let us only remove the body hence from the vicinity of Queen Joanna, and then away!"

"But whither shall we carry it?" again inquired several of the conspirators, who felt, the very moment after the perpetration of the murder, all that uncertainty of purpose, that want of accord, and that confusion of ideas, which generally accompany heinous crime.

"This is the trifling of women and children," said the fierce Lord Marshal: "let the Hungarian drunkard be thrown into the old stable forthwith!"

The two brothers, the Chamberlains Tommaso and Masolo da Bologna, then raised the lifeless body in their arms, and assisted by Caffarello and Messer Raimondo da Napoli, and followed by the rest of the assassins, they carried it out of the chamber, and with silent stealthy steps along the corridor, in chambers opening on which slept many "who should against the murderer shut the door."

At the extremity of the corridor, a narrow staircase, cut within the thick wall of the castle, led almost directly to the deserted stable. The foremost of the conspirators gently opened the door at the head of the staircase; but when those who bore the corpse looked forward into its horrid, grave-like

obscurity, they would not proceed farther without a light. The fierce Lord Marshal, cursing their imbecility, glided back to Andreasso's now empty room, and brought a cresset-lamp.

By this light, which dimly illuminated the damp, dark passage, the haggard faces of the conspirators, and the horrid discoloured countenance of their victim, which most of them dreaded to look at, and yet could not avoid so doing, they began to descend the rough steps; but they had not gone far, when several of them whispered simultaneously, "Hark! what noise is that! Hark there again!"

They paused. A hollow murmuring sound penetrated the thick walls by small loop-holes cut in it here and there, to admit air. They listened for a moment, breathless and motionless: the sounds came again; and though they were only the gentle waving and rustling of the trees in the garden agitated by the night-breeze, they filled their guilty ears with terror.

"'Tis the noise of an approaching troop of horse!"* said Masolo da Bologna, becoming even still more ghastly pale.

"Ay! 'tis the beat of horses' hoofs, and they

* "E portandolo dal Palazzo per una scala, parve loro di udire gente da cavallo."—Polistore.

come nearer and nearer :—we shall be surprised and caught with the murdered King in our hands !” rejoined Caffarello ; and on the impulse of affright and horror, they all rushed back to the open corridor, and throwing the body over the parapet into the garden, fled instantly from the palace by a secret passage that led beyond the walls of Aversa to a quiet road in the direction of Atella.

Scarcely had the regicides quitted the corridor, when Isolda, the affectionate nurse, waking from her peaceful sleep, went towards the chamber of the King, to inquire how he fared, as was her wont to do frequently every night. She saw the couch in the outer chamber, on which he often slept, tumbled and pressed as though he had been lying on it ; but not finding him there, she passed on to the sleeping apartment of the Queen Joanna, who sleeping too soundly to be disturbed by the very slight noise made by her husband’s murderers,—had also just awoke when it was too late to save him, and was sitting mournfully on the side of her solitary bed.

“Where is my Lord the King?” inquired the nurse with much agitation, on seeing the Queen alone.

“I know not where he is ! Of a certainty, thy

Lord is too young and imprudent to pass his nights thus, away from his wife!" said the Queen reproachfully.

"I must find my Lord,—I must find my dear Lord, imprudent though he be, and naughty!" cried the devoted nurse; and taking a lamp in her hand, she went searching through the dark silent castle for Andrea.*

In the banqueting-hall she found several Hungarians snoring in the scene of their excesses, and the light of her lamp neither woke them, nor discovered to her him whom she sought. She had visited many other places, and was returning with now serious alarm along the corridor, when she happened to look over the parapet, and discovered the body of Andrea lying in the moonlight. Returning hastily to the Queen, she told her that the King was sleeping in the garden.

"Prithee let him sleep on!" said Joanna angrily. "After my prayers on the eve of yesterday,—after all my prayers, that he would refrain from such debaucheries,—to be again in such a state! Prithee let him sleep! and may his cool couch sober him, and give him a better lesson than I can do!"

* Domandò alla Reina: *Dove è il mio Signore?* Rispose la Reina: *Io non lo so dove si sia: certamente il tuo Signore è troppo giovine.*"—Polistore.

But the nurse, "because she loved her Lord as a mother,"* hurried with maternal solicitude down to the garden, where, to her unspeakable horror, she found the King, not sleeping, but dead—cold dead, with the rope that had strangled him round his neck. He had on his long hose, one white and one red, as was his fashion to wear them; and in his mouth he had that piece of flesh which he had torn with his teeth from the hand of the traitor Beltrame. Then the nurse began to lament aloud, and with sobs and tears warned the Queen and the other inmates of the Castle of Aversa of the dreadful tragedy that had been enacted.†

The widowed Joanna, the nurse, the Hungarians, and all those who remained about the palace, were so terrified and confounded by the horrible event, that they knew not what to do; and the King's body, carried into the adjoining church of the Celestines, lay there some days without sepulture: but Ursillo Minutolo, a gentleman and Canon of Naples, went to Aversa, and had it brought to the capital, and interred it at his own expense in the Cathedral of Naples, and in the Chapel of St. Louis, where his tomb is to be seen even to this day.‡

* "Perciocchè amava il suo Signore siccome madre."—Polistore. † Il Libro di Polistore. ‡ Angelo di Costanzo.

When the Queen was sufficiently recovered from her consternation and horror, she repaired to her capital, where, in spite of some popular surmises and whispered implications, the nobility and clergy generally were so far from suspecting her of the murder of her husband, that they paid her visits of condolence, and counselled with her how to punish the murderers. The friar Robert and the Hungarian party dreaded to move out; and throwing up at this critical moment the management of affairs they had so abused, every thing was left to the young Queen, who prudently assembled round her the wisest and most virtuous of her grandfather's ministers and nobles, and by their advice committed to Count Ugo del Balzo the charge of investigating the bloody transaction, and of bringing the guilty to justice.*

Meanwhile the condition of the amorous squire of the Grand Marshal, whom we left in the hands of the Hungarian guard, was most painful and critical. He was still in custody when the astounding intelligence arrived of the King's murder; and as he had been so eager to go out of the gate that led to the Aversa road, and at a late hour, the

* Giannone, *Istoria Civile del Regno di Napoli*.

very night of the murder; and being known moreover as one frequently about the court, he was detained under strong suspicion, and finally was ordered to prepare himself to confess or to undergo tortures, on account of the foul assassination he had so endeavoured to prevent. Whilst he lay in his dungeon, he was informed that his master, by fleeing from the country, had acknowledged his guilt; and having no longer sufficient motives, supposing the Grand Marshal in safety, to be silent at the cost of excruciating anguish, and perhaps death to himself, he disclosed all he knew, which was no more than what he heard at the castle in the bay. Fortunately for the squire, Raimondo da Napoli, one of the murderers, was discovered and arrested at the same time; and on being put to the question, disclosed the same names, and in every thing confirmed the revelation Gaetano had made. The squire, however, was still detained in prison; and it was not till after many months, when several of the persons guilty, and some only suspected of the horrible conspiracy, had been punished with detestable tortures and death, and Isolda the faithful nurse had followed her king to the grave, that Joanna, moved by the melancholy tale of his love, and unmerited sufferings, procured his liberation, and

waited him to Isoldina, whom he had doubly won by twice periling his life for her.

In asserting or implying the innocence of the lovely young Queen Joanna, I do not consider that I have transgressed against history. After a careful comparison of the different cotemporary, or nearly cotemporary, authorities, which I made at Naples some years since, and which is much too long to be inserted in a work like this, the impression left on my mind was, that she was not guilty of, nor privy to, her husband's murder. This also seems to be Mr. Hallam's opinion, which is always entitled to deference or respect. The cause of the young Queen is pleaded at length by the ingenious author of the "Historical Life of Joanna of Sicily, Queen of Naples, &c." a modern work, which does not appear to be so well known as it ought to be.

The generality of historians of other nations, who have reversed the process of De Sade, and have ~~counted~~ the suffrages instead of *weighing* them, have indeed unhesitatingly declared Joanna guilty; but I would repeat, as I have felt, the words of Lord Byron's preface to his "Marino Faliero," (another character, whom unexamining historians have treat-

ed lightly and unjustly :) "I know no justification, at any distance of time, for calumniating an historical character: surely truth belongs to the dead, and to the unfortunate!"

The defence of old Brantome is a singular piece of argument and composition. He reprehends the Pesarese historian, Collenuccio, for telling the ridiculous tale, that a day or two before his assassination, as Andrea suddenly entered the Queen's apartment, he found her making a silken rope, and, on asking her for what object, Joanna said laughingly, "It is to hang you with, my husband!" and the irascible Frenchman calls all the Italian historians foul calumniators of the fame of the French princes and princesses, and very great liars!—though, had he given himself the trouble to examine them, he would have found his own view of the case taken, and the innocence of his heroine Joanna maintained, by the best of those writers.

But Brantome's defence of Joanna I. is nothing as a curiosity, compared with his palliation of the libidinous Joanna II. Those who have read his quaint pages cannot have forgotten the joyous manner in which he felicitates one of the Queen's husbands on the mode of his death: "Eh! où put-il mieux mourir," &c.

The accounts of the way in which Andrea was put to death at Aversa are perplexingly various. I have followed, almost to the letter, that of Polistore, which is by far the most picturesque and striking, and as likely to be true as any of them. It is inserted in that all-complete mine of Italian chronicle, Muratori's collection of "*Scriptores Rerum Italicarum*."

HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

Fifteenth Century.

A.D. 1400 to 1500.

"We shall find," says Muratori, "the fifteenth century not less agitated by wars and revolutions than the barbarous ages which preceded it." The enthusiasts for republican liberty will not, however, watch these wars and revolutions with any great interest, as they relate rather to a change of masters than the assertion or establishment of political independence. A.D.
1400.

The cities of Lombardy, the cradles of Italian liberty, had now for half a century ceased to be "influenced by that generous disdain of one man's will, which is to republican governments what chastity is to women—a conservative principle, never to be reasoned upon, or subjected to calculations of utility. By force, or stratagem, or free consent, almost all the Lombard republics had fallen under the yoke of some leading citizen, who became the lord (*signore*), or, in the Grecian sense, tyrant of his country. . . . And before the middle of the fourteenth century, all those cities which had spurned at the faintest mark of submission to the emperors, lost even the recollection of self-government, and were bequeathed, like an undoubted patrimony, among the children of their lords. Such is the progress of usurpation, and such the vengeance that Heaven reserves for those who waste in licence and faction its first of social blessings—Liberty!"*

* Mr. Hallam's *Middle Ages*, chap. iii. part 2.

A.D. 1400. The few allusions we have been able to make in these Summaries of general Italian history, must indeed have established that it was faction, with its attendant evil licence, and faction alone, that led to this melancholy result. They had resisted their old enemies the emperors, in their might,—the spirit and talents of the two Frederics had animated and guided none of their successors—the Italians had nothing to fear from them; and if their other antagonist and foe to Liberty, the Church of Rome, had been enabled to make encroachments, it was still their insane, factious tendency that opened the door to those encroachments, and finally forged the mingled links of the chain of signorial and ecclesiastical despotism. By the end of the fourteenth century, even the powerful Republic of Genoa, distracted by her factions, had sought the dangerous protection of a foreign sovereign.* Of the two other great republics, the same causes were tending to the same formation of the power of one man, or one family, in Florence; and in Venice, external independence was dearly paid for by internal tyranny, and an insidious and cruel oligarchy, with its systematized *espionage* and secret tribunals, might have served to wean men's affections from such a republic as the Venetian.

The last year of the preceding century, and the first of this, (while the plague had revived,) were remarkable for the numerous processions and pilgrimages of the Bianchi, or White Penitents, who, enveloped in linen robes, or rather bed-sheets, that covered even their faces, went through Italy, from the Alps to the Sea of Messina, singing litanies, and imploring for afflicted earth the peace

* In four years, from 1390 to 1394, the Doge of Genoa was ten times changed—swept away, or brought back, in the fluctuations of popular tumult.

and mercy of Heaven. Whole populous districts—men, women, and children—were seen to join the ghost-like progresses. During the reign of this devout influenza no violence was committed, no treason meditated, and Italy breathed in peace; but it was immediately followed by new plots on the part of the ambitious Duke of Milan, Gean Galeazzo Visconti. At his instigation, Lazaro Guinigi, who governed the Republic of Lucca with much talent and firmness, had been assassinated by his own brother the preceding year, and he now encouraged farther sanguinary revolutions, in order to make himself master of that little state. There was this year another conspiracy at Florence, headed by the Ricci, Alberti, and Medici. A.D. 1400.

Robert, the newly elected emperor, went to try once more the Imperial fortune in Italy. He sustained a signal defeat in a ranged battle in the Brescian territory, from the Italian troops of the Duke of Milan, commanded by Giacopo del Verme, Carlo Malatesta of Rimini, and other Italian captains, and was forced to retreat towards the Alpine pass of Trent. This was the first battle the Italian and German troops had fought together for many years. The Italians showed they had made some progress in the art of war. 1401.

Gean Galeazzo attacked Bentivoglio, the Signior of Bologna, who was defeated, and finally massacred. On the 3rd of September, the successful tyrant of Milan died of the plague. He was no sooner dead than the state he had enlarged “by the dark alternation of perfidy and violence” fell to pieces. 1402.

The political balance of Italy was restored for a short time. The arms of Florence, wielded chiefly by condottieri, or mercenaries, reduced the Ghibelline nobles of the Apennines, whose castles overhung her territory, to obedience and subjection. 1404.

A.D. 1406. The Venetians, who had conquered Padua, infamously put to death, in prison, Francesco Novello da Carrara, the signior of that state, and the following day murdered his two brave sons.

The unfortunate Republic of Pisa was subjugated by Florence, after a dreadful siege.

The election of Pope Gregory XII. took place this year, and served to prolong the duration of the great schism.

1409. Gregory XII. and his rival Benedict XIII. were both deposed by the Council at Pisa, who elected Alexander V. But the deposed pontiffs resisted; and the Catholic world had the scandal to see three Popes waging a war of Bulls and excommunications with each other.

1410. During the dissensions of the Popes, and the general weakness of Upper Italy, occasioned by wars and factions, the kingdom of Naples was animated, and not for the first time, with the hope of extending its dominion or supremacy over the whole of the peninsula. The crown of Naples was now worn by Ladislaus, who was warlike and ambitious, talented and unprincipled. Pretending to act as protector of Gregory XII. one of the Popes, he was already master of Rome, and of a great part of the ecclesiastical state. But Florence was wealthier than Ladislaus: she bought over many of the mercenaries, who mainly composed his army; brought his old rival Louis of Anjou into Italy with an army, raised him up enemies on every side, and finally drove him from Rome, and back on his kingdom of Naples.

1411. Louis of Anjou defeated Ladislaus at Rocca-Secca, near the Garigliano, within his own states, but was soon afterwards obliged to abandon his enterprises and Italy.

1412. Under the mediation of the Florentine Republic, Ladislaus made peace; but the following year that restless

prince, with a Neapolitan army, suddenly sacked Rome, that experienced all the horrors of barbarian warfare, and conquered anew the whole of the Papal states. A.D. 1412.

That monarch was now in the zenith of his power :—his dominions extended to the confines of Tuscany ; he commanded, besides inferior hosts, fifteen thousand of the finest gens-d'armerie of Italy, which country he had every prospect of reducing, when he died of poison, or the effects of excessive debauchery. 1414.

The Council of Constance at last put an end to the disgraceful schism of the Church by electing Otho Colonna, who assumed the title of Martin V. 1418.

The strength of Milan had revived under the government of Filippo Maria, and by the arms of the brave Conte Carmagnola—and we find her again conquering and murdering among her neighbours Piacenza, Lodi, and Como. This tyrant Filippo Maria had his wife Beatrice Tenda, to whom he owed almost every thing, put to death on a public scaffold, under an infamous accusation of adultery.

Filippo Maria obtained the Signiory of Genoa, which he followed up by making extensive conquests in Lombardy. 1421.

The brave Swiss pikemen, the confines of whose territory had been encroached upon by Filippo Maria, inflicted a sanguinary punishment on the gens-d'armerie of the Milanese at Arbedo, near Bellinzona. But Count Carmagnola retained possession of the Levantine valley ; and Filippo Maria, the Duke of Milan, now asserted a power from the Ligurian sea to the summit of Mount St. Gothard, and from the frontiers of Piedmont to the confines of the ecclesiastical states,—a larger extent of dominion than had fallen to the obedience of any prince of Upper Italy since the overthrow of the old kingdom of the Lombards. 1422.

- A.D. War between the Duke of Milan and the Republic of
 1424. Florence, to the disadvantage of the latter.
1426. Venice, that, since the exhausting war of Chiozza, had recovered much of her lost territories and her spirit, allied herself with Florence against the arbitrary and ambitious Duke of Milan.
1427. The great Carmagnola, having been ungratefully treated by the Duke of Milan, had entered the service of Venice, for whom he this year gained a splendid victory over his late master at Macale, upon the Oglio.
1432. —Witnessed the atrocious ingratitude of the Venetians, whose detestable oligarchy tortured, and then beheaded Count Carmagnola.
1433. Peace was made between the States of Upper Italy, at Ferrara, and Venice obtained splendid acquisitions.
1434. Another revolution of Florence, which summoned Cosmo de' Medici from exile to exercise a supreme control over the government of the state, "commenced the last act in the great drama of Florentine liberty, of which the descendants of Cosmo were to complete the destruction."
1435. Joanna II. of Naples, who had succeeded to her brother Ladislaus, and whose reign had been as fatal to her country as that of the more unfortunate, but every way worthier Joanna I., died this year, leaving her crown to be disputed by Alfonso of Arragon, and Regnier of Anjou. After the unhappy country had been for seven more years desolated by the war of parties, and Alfonso subjected to great vicissitudes of fortune, he was finally established on the throne of the Two Sicilies in 1442.
- The Genoese rose against the Milanese, and recovered their liberty.
1437. A new war broke out between the Duke of Milan and the allied Republics of Florence and Venice.

Peace was made under the mediation of Francesco Sforza, a skilful condottiero, or military adventurer, who had acquired great reputation and power throughout Italy. A.D.
1441.

Francesco Sforza had scarcely restored peace to others when a league was formed against himself by the Church, that had previously given him the March of Ancona in fief, as a reward for his services, which had secured Romagna to the See of Rome. Florence and Venice aided Sforza. Filippo Maria Visconti, his father-in-law, but one of his bitterest enemies, died. The Milanese again established a republic; and, giving the command of their armies to Sforza, he thus far triumphed over his enemies. 1447.

Francesco Sforza, who had little respect for republican institutions, or conscience of any sort, became Duke of Milan, and as arbitrary a tyrant as the Visconti. By the middle of the fifteenth century the Dukes of Savoy had consolidated a powerful government in the west of Italy; and Piedmont, hitherto little noticed, will figure in the after annals of the peninsula. 1450.

The elevation of Francesco Sforza to the ducal throne of Milan had again changed the unstable system of Italian alliances and politics. Alfonso of Naples, and the Republic of Venice, joined against him and Florence. The minor states were drawn in on one side or the other. The commencement of general hostilities was for a short time retarded by the presence of the new emperor, Frederic III., but he only went to Rome to be crowned, and then left Italy. 1451.

A general war raged throughout Italy, which was only stopped by the general panic produced in— 1452.

—By the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, who seemed already to menace Italy. Peace was then made at Lodi; and under the guarantee of the Pope, a quadru- 1454.

A.D. ple league was formed between the sovereigns of Naples
1454. and Milan, and the Republics of Florence and Venice, for the preservation of the tranquillity of Italy. This year the oligarchy of Venice made itself still more odious by the election of a permanent committee of three Inquisitors of State.

1457. The wrongs of the old Doge Foscari were ended in death,—he breaking a blood-vessel as he heard the great bell of St. Mark announce the election of another Doge of Venice.

1458. The very distinguished soldier and statesman Alfonso of Naples, died as he was prosecuting a successful war against Genoa, which republic had become already a prey to worse than her old dissensions. His successor, Ferdinand, was unpopular. The barons of the kingdom offered the crown to Prince John of Anjou; and the old wars of party between the Angevins and the Arragonians were renewed, to the dear cost of the kingdom. After a six years' struggle, Ferdinand of Arragon triumphed over his rival, and remained in quiet possession of the throne.

1463. Venice, whose foreign conquests were straitened by the advancing Turks, boldly made war on the Ottoman empire; beginning an arduous struggle, in which for many years she reaped great honour, and was one of the champions of Christendom. Pope Pius II. preached a crusade against the Mussulmans; but Europe, that once with fanatic profusion had thrown out her millions upon Asia, could now hardly listen to the call, though the Turks were at her doors, and she had to defend her own territories.

1464. Cosmo de Medici died, after having governed the Athens of the Middle Ages with uninterrupted success for thirty years, and enriched her with all the wonders of

art—benefits perhaps dearly purchased by the prostration of liberty.

Francesco Sforza died at Milan, and was succeeded on the ducal throne by his son Galeazzo Maria, who, after an infamous, debauched reign of ten years, was murdered in the church of St. Stefano by the Olgiati, whose sister he had violated. A.D.
1466.

Negropont, the most important of the Venetian possessions in the Archipelago, was conquered by the Turks, and Italy menaced by a tremendous armament, commanded by Mahomet II. The greatest alarm prevailed throughout Italy, and the Pope renewed the League of 1455 for the common defence. 1471.

The Turks appeared for the first time in Italy, but only on a short, predatory excursion into Friuli. 1472.

This year was illustrated by the birth of Giovanni de' Medici, who afterwards became the celebrated Pope Leo X. 1475.

The Turks again penetrated into Friuli,—defeated the Venetians, spread themselves in the open country between the Isonzo and the Tagliamento; passed the latter of these rivers, and ravaged the country with fires, that were visible by night from the towers of Venice itself; but on repeating their visit the next year, they were defeated by the better prepared Venetians. 1477.

--Was famous in Florence for the so often described conspiracy of the Pazzi who murdered Giuliano de' Medici in the cathedral church, but only strengthened the absolute government of his brother Lorenzo. 1478.

Venice made peace with the Ottomans after fifteen years of the most arduous warfare in which she had ever been engaged. During this war she lost, besides the Negropont, the city of Scutari and a part of Albania; but gained, not by arms, and from the Ottomans, but by 1479.

A.D. treachery, and from a weak Christian prince, the rich
1479. and beautiful island of Cyprus.

But during this war the losses of Genoa were much greater than those of Venice, and she gained no Cyprus to set off against them. The conquest of Constantinople placed the key of the Black Sea in the hands of the Turks, who soon obtained possession of all the Genoese colonies on the shores of that sea.

1480. Lodovico Sforza, commonly called the Moor, usurped the government of Milan, in the name of his nephew the young Duke.

The Turks took Otranto in the kingdom of Naples, and again spread consternation throughout Italy.

1481. Otranto was retaken by the Neapolitans.

1482. The ambitious Pontiff, Sixtus IV., made a league with Venice and other states, to despoil the house of Este, and thus excited a new war in Italy. The Pope, finding the business an unprofitable one, signed a peace; guaranteed to the house of Este the integrity of its dominions, and excommunicated his late allies the Venetians, who disregarded his Bulls, and continued the war on their own account; nor did they terminate it until by the treaty of Bagnolo they had enriched themselves with a considerable extent of territory at the expense of the Este family.

1485. Pope Innocent VIII. supported a revolt of the Neapolitan barons against Ferdinand their King, to whom he had owed his elevation to the popedom. Lorenzo de' Medici for Florence, and Lodovico Sforza for Milan, contracted an alliance with the Neapolitan King, against the party headed by the Pope. Italy was again involved in a general war, but never was war more bloodless. In the battle of Lamentana, the only one on record, the Duke of Calabria, the son of King Ferdinand, gained a complete

victory, by fairly pushing his opponents off the field, and taking a few prisoners. During a contest of several hours, not a single soldier was either killed or wounded ! so farcical had become the once tragical warfare of the Italians. But the blood that had not flowed in the field was shed in the dungeon and the scaffold, by the vindictive King Ferdinand, as soon as he could secure peace. A.D.
1485.

Genoa relapsed again to the yoke of Milan, an Adorne governing it as lieutenant of the Duke of Milan, Lodovico Sforza. 1488.

The public faith and credit of Florence were violated, to save Lorenzo de' Medici from bankruptcy. Lorenzo, who had outlived the last spark of Florentine freedom, died two years after. 1490.

Italy (a rare occurrence !) enjoyed some years of peace, but her apprehensions were reasonably awakened by the gradual consolidation of gigantic powers beyond the Alps, and the attitude of France and Germany, who were so soon to make her the field of grander warfare. Lodovico Sforza attempted to form a general league for her protection against the Ultramontanes. Had he succeeded, despite his own tyranny, he would have been entitled to the gratitude of the Italians ; but he was thwarted by Piero de' Medici, by the King of Naples, by the paltry animosities of the innumerable little states of the peninsula, and by the treacherous, selfish spirit that had corrupted the whole soul of Italian politics.

In consequence of a powerful Italian league, (at the head of which were Florence and Naples,) formed against himself, Lodovico Sforza invited Charles VIII. of France to cross the Alps, and thus sealed the doom of the independence of Italy, that, three years before, he had the nobleness of soul to cherish ! 1493.

Ferdinand of Naples, whose whole reign had been tem- 1494.

A.D. 1494. pestuous, died as the greatest of the storms was approaching. He was succeeded by his son Alfonso II., who inherited only a part of his talents and virtues, but more than all his vices.

The invited Charles VIII., who claimed the crown of Naples by the force of descent and testament, entered Italy by the Western Alps and Piedmont, where he was received as a friend. At Pavia he was met by his first inviter, Lodovico Sforza, who supplied him with subsidies, and placed the resources of Milan at his disposal. As Lodovico's young nephew died, and he ascended his ducal throne just at this juncture, he was generally accused of having caused his relative's death by slow poison. At Florence, Piero de' Medici made an abject submission to King Charles, which caused the temporary expulsion of the Medici family from Florence. The Pisans, protected by a French force Charles left them, threw off the Florentine yoke. Meeting no resistance, the French King entered Rome, whence a Neapolitan army had withdrawn on his approach, and received a terrified submission from the Pope Alexander VI. The unpopular King of Naples, Alfonso, abdicated in favour of his son Ferdinand, whose virtues deserved the throne, which he could not however defend for the present, for his army fled at the mere appearance of the French vanguard, from the frontiers to Capua; the towns of the never steady kingdom raised the banners of Anjou and revolt, and even Naples, his capital, became the scene of a popular insurrection. Moreover, the Condottieri in his pay betrayed him, and Ferdinand II. was obliged to fly to the little island of Ischia on the approach of Charles, who made an unopposed and triumphant entrance into Naples on the 24th of February 1495.

1495 But the wavering and perfidious Italian politics that

had favoured his march, now prepared for Charles VIII. as rapid a retreat from his easy but transitory conquest. The Pope, the Republic of Venice, the Emperor Maximilian, and Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, treated about a league, to preserve Italy from French encroachment; and when the ever suspicious Lodovico Sforza was won to their views, the ruin of Charles VIII. or of his enterprise, was completed. The French, after three months' occupation, abandoned the kingdom, retreated in great haste through the states of the Church and Tuscany, and though they asserted the military honour and prowess of their nation in the glorious battle of Fornova in Lombardy, where they thoroughly beat the leagued Italians, they were obliged to recross the Alps. A.D.
1495.

Ferdinand II. recovered his kingdom and died a month after, in the flower of his age. He was succeeded by his uncle Frederic, as amiable a prince as himself. 1496.

Girolamo Savonarola, a Dominican friar and an extraordinary fanatic, who had governed Florence since the expulsion of the imbecile Piero de' Medici, was burned for heresy by order of the Pope. The faction of the Compagnacci, the enemies of Savonarola, then succeeded to the government of Florence. 1498.

Louis XII., who had succeeded Charles VIII., laid claim not only to Naples and Sicily, but to the Duchy of Milan.

The French crossed the Alps and made an easy conquest of the Milanese territory. Lodovico Sforza, who had betrayed so many, was after some variations of fortune betrayed in his turn into the hands of the French, who sent him into France, where he miserably ended his days in a dungeon ten years after. 1499.

The fourteenth century in Italy had been the epoch of the creative geniuses of her literature — the fifteenth

A. D. 1499. became the age of her erudite. The study of the classics, Roman and Greek—the latter only just touched on by Petrarca and Boccaccio—was now prosecuted with extreme diligence and success. The influx of Greeks after the fall of Constantinople propagated the knowledge of the language of Homer and Demosthenes. Professorships were established in nearly every city. Printing introduced in Germany was improved in Italy, and the presses of Venice, Bologna, Milan, and Rome, multiplied with prolific rapidity the copies of the ancient codices that were everywhere sought with enthusiastic earnestness. Medals, inscriptions, statues, *relievi*, and all the fragments of antiquity that could assist learning and improve taste, were collected at the same time; and little states and individuals spent sums on these objects that utterly confounded our notions of political economy and of individual munificence. Among the numerous encouragers of literature and art, we may mention *some* of the popes in Rome, the Medici in Florence, the Visconti, and then the Sforza in Milan, the Arragon dynasty in Naples, the Gonzaga, and the ancient family of Este in Mantua and Ferrara, and the Dukes of Urbino.

Learning may be for a while inimical to invention: the study of Greek and Latin turned attention from the colloquial idiom, but the magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici soon woke the "bella favella" from its slumber, and Poliziano, Burchiello, Benivieni, Bernardo Accolti, Pico della Mirandola, Il Pulci, and Boiardo, (the harbinger of the imitable Ariosto,) with many others, lent it new graces in poetry; whilst Leon Battista Alberti, Pandolfo Colonna, (the first of the Italians to abandon the dry style of the chronicle for the nobler form of regular history,) Bernardino Corio, Amerigo Vespucci, and many contemporaries, cultivated it in prose.

The cradle of Italian art, like that of Italian poetry, had been rocked on the stormy waves of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries ; but painting and sculpture and architecture could not, from their nature, reach at once to a grade of excellence, as poetry had done—they required longer nursing ; and it was in the fifteenth century that they indicated their approaching maturity, and that Michael Angelo, and other wonderful geniuses were born, who in the following century carried those arts to a point of perfection which has not been surpassed.

A. D.
1499.

To the fifteenth century, moreover, and to an Italian, is due the glory of the **DISCOVERY** of the **NEW WORLD!**



The Condottiero.

“ Le cose della guerra andavan zoppe.”

La Secchia Rapita, canto xii.

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1800

The Condottiero.

“ HERE’S success to the Companies of Adventure, and the honest calling of Condottieri !” exclaimed an English warrior, emptying a capacious cup of Aleatico, one of Tuscany’s best wines.

“ Success to the Condottieri !” was shouted by every voice of rather a numerous party ; whilst *one* added, as a sort of grace, after he had finished his long draught, “ And thanks to the eternal dissensions of these Italians, who have never grace enough to be at peace, nor courage enough to fight out their own quarrels. We shall never want employment in Italy.”

“ Very true, comrade : from the Alps to the end of the Calabrias, we have an open and a ready market. We are the free denizens and elect of the land. Like the prophets of old, or the troubadours of more modern times, with whom a tattered cloak and a prediction, a harp and a song, were passports

everywhere, and everywhere sure of the best the country could produce, the Condottieri have only to carry their horses, their armour, and their lances, and they can command throughout Italy the means of leading a joyous life; and this, to my simple comprehension, is a pleasanter tenure than the holding of houses and lands, which, somehow or other, will be consumed and spent,—at least, I never could keep mine on the banks of the Thames,” added a blue-eyed warrior.

“Nor I mine by the Danube,” said another.

“And as to my fat acres on the Rhine,” said another of the party, “why, by this good wine-cup! what with dice, and women, and a little *drinking*, they had all gone over to another master before the grass began to grow over my old father’s grave, and there was I left at the pleasant age of two and twenty with no other fortune than this old sword and this—”

“And they have never failed thee in glorious times like these,” interrupted one of his comrades.

“I cannot say they ever have,” answered the German;—“but pass round the flagon, and let us fill!”

“This is a choice cup of Italian wine—ruby-coloured, generous, and no headach in it,” said an

old soldier, after heaving a sigh, which pronounced the funeral elegy of somewhat more than a pint of Aleatico.

"As pleasant a drink, I protest, as ever I drank in France, from the day I emptied King John's flask on the field of Poitiers, to the time that, in search of employment, I crossed the Alps," added an English veteran, curling his light-brown mustachios as he spoke.

"I say, the wines of Italy are four times as good as those of France—and I will maintain it arithmetically," said one of the old Englishmen, who had before spoken.

"To the devil with thy arithmetic!—what have calculation and accounts to do with us Condottieri, who carry a receipt for every bill at the end of our lances?—but thou canst never forget thou once kept'st a school at Windsor, and hadst to count the chalks for beer and meed (I wonder we could ever drink such stuff!) behind the bar of mine hostess of the Red Lion," retorted one of his countrymen.

"I care not for his unwarlike calling, or his beers or his red lions," said a Frenchman pettishly; "but I should like to know how the wines of Tuscany here are better than those that grow in the plains

of Champagne or the hills of Burgundy—four times better?”

“Why, thus,” said the *ci-devant* pedagogue, “they are twice as strong, and twice as cheap; and as two and two make four—eh! have I not proved it arithmetically?”

The schoolmaster's chuckle of triumph was interrupted by the angry Frenchman, who was still patriotic in matters of wines, though he had been drinking those of Italy for the last five-and-twenty years of his life; and there seemed every probability of a quarrel on this delicate subject, when a high-cheek-boned, red-haired, and lank old Scotchman coolly interrupted the noisy disputants, and said:

“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. We have here the wines of Italy, (he took a long draught to prove the fact,) but where are those of France? Hence, the wines of Italy are at least twice as good as those of France to *us*—and so let us show our proper sense of their merits by drinking them, and leave off talking, and be jolly.”

The whole party agreed in this philosophical decision, and for some time showed their rational notions of joviality by a silence, only broken by the jingling contact of the flagon with the cup, or the occasional monosyllable of “Fill! fill!”

The first person who attempted to renew conversation was a young English knight, who, not finding employment at home, had but lately come to see service in Italy.

"All this is mighty pleasant," said he, "and our life is altogether a merry and comfortable life enough; but I confess I begin to be a-weary of it, and to sigh for a bold field where something like honour may be obtained!"

"Have a thought, my bold Sir Robert!" replied one of his aged countrymen; "honour is an empty name here. We have little chance of gaining it, except on each other's crests—and that, methinks, were not patriotic or natural. No, no! let us spend joyfully the money the unwarlike Italians give us for keeping up their feuds, and shed as little blood as may be."

"Ay, that is the maxim of us Condottieri! When these silky Signiors are so careful of their own persons, and in their own quarrels, why should we be so anxious to hack the good armour off our backs, and peril life or limbs—for honour?" said another of the party.

"This may be all very true and very reasonable," replied Sir Robert; "but I had other notions in my head when the knight's spur was fastened to my

boot, and I took up the lance which my good father bore at Cressy and Poitiers."

"I bore as good a lance as that," said one of the old Englishmen, "and found plenty of work for it in France—and a mighty deal of good it did me! Why, I tell ye, Sir Robert, when I followed Sir John Hawkwood to Italy, I had not the value of a second cuirass in my purse, but plenty of wounds scarred on my stupid hide. And even then, indeed, the great Sir John, who could not forget his old tricks, but would keep fighting here in Italy for Pisa, or for Florence, for Milan, or the Pope, and in downright, bloody earnest, led me into many a hot mêlée, at the end of which I had the satisfaction of hearing that such an Italian republic had gained a great victory over such another—which had only been disgraced by the cruelty of the foreign mercenaries!—Pretty honour, i' faith!"

"And then," continued another old soldier, "when we went about with the fierce Sir John, cutting off heads as though they had been heads of garlic, and lopping off limbs as though we had been pruning vines—storming a town here, and burning a harvest there—we were justly looked upon as devils by the poor natives, who, after all, had never done harm to us. And listen to the tales the

Italian nurses tell to their children in the cradle, of the atrocities of the first companies of adventure, and of the Duke Guarnieri, and Fra Moriale, and Conrad Lando ! Who can envy such glory as that ? —I tell ye, Sir Robert, you would not have found in those days the name of a Condottiero the ready passport to the graces of all those black-eyed Italian maidens you are so fond of."

"The last consideration is worth something," said the young knight ; "but still I would be a-doing. I cannot help sighing for an opportunity of deserving the name and the arms I bear ; sighing even for my old life in hardy England, my bow-shooting in old Sherwood, my hunt and cry of hounds, and—"

"Pshaw ! Sir Robert," interrupted a fair, fat German ; "when I first came to Italy, I thought and hankered after former days just as you do ; but now I confess I care for no bows but the bow of a fiddle. I prefer the Italian song and the guitar to the yelping of curs ; and as for hunting, why I love the pursuit of a plump donzella better than that of the sleekest doe."

"Here's to the black-eyed donzelle of Italy ! Comrades, fill the cup to the brim !" cried one of the bacchanalians.

"The donzelle of Italy to the brave Condottieri!" was the amendment of another, and the form in which the toast was drunk with deep devotion.

"Now, Fritz-Fribourg for a song!" roared out a jolly, red-nosed toper from the banks of the Rhine.

"Ay! a song—a song to crown the toast!" was echoed by all present.

The fair, fat German who had expressed his gusto for fiddle-bows and guitars, then struck up a lively chansonette, which, for the intelligence of the cosmopolitish company was composed in a curious *pot-pourri* of Italian, French, Provençal, German, and English. The choice lyrical effusion was received with corresponding enthusiasm, all present joining in the chorus:—

Then oh for the Matchen—la bien-aimée!
Viva! viva la Donzella!
Huzza! for the Condottiero gay,
Qu'il gagne toujours la bella!
The Condottiero!—hurra!—hurra!—
Il Condottier' e la bella!

But as the songster's last verse contained a general comparison of the charms of Italian women with those of the rest of Europe, in which the turned-up noses of the French fair were spoken of some-

what disrespectfully, the peppery monsieur, who had vindicated his country's wines, feeling also patriotic as to her women, would render them the same service. A dispute was begun by an assertion on the side of the Frenchman, that no taste could be expected from a heavy German who had never been at Paris; and it probably would have ended, as often happened among these oddly composed companies, in a general broil and fighting, had not some of the knights who had authority over them imposed silence and drawn their attention to two important facts,—that the wine was all drunk out, and that it was time to determine whether they were to go to seek service.

“Our late mistress Pisa,” argued one of the old knights, “has been so completely beaten and drained by Florence, that she is not likely to be able to give us even our arrears for many a day!”

“She paid us good gold whilst she could, but she is ruined, and ‘No money no condottiero’ is our motto: we must go to those who can pay,” said another.

“Why not at once to Florence?—she has the gold that Pisa has lost. She is ever wealthy, and a most regular pay-mistress!” rejoined another of these precursors of Captain Dalgetty.

“To Florence!” mused the young English knight,

Sir Robert,—“ to Florence, against whom we were only the other day fighting for Pisa !”

“ Oh ! that is of no consequence !” replied one of his seniors. “ We Condottieri are accustomed to these sudden changes of service ! I have seen the day when I have followed one banner at sunrise, and have been marching under its rival at sunset. If the Florentines want us, they will hire us ; and as long as they can pay us, we need care for nothing else. When the wealthy burghers need us no longer, or money is all spent, we will leave them as we have left Pisa, and there will always be plenty of jealous, quarrelsome states to engage us in Italy !”

“ The Florentine bank is as punctual as the noon-day sun,” said an old English warrior, “ and very pretty and profitable service have I had from that republic in the days of the great Sir John ; but as she is now rather well provided with men-at-arms, and as we are *rather* a numerous set of lances, I have been thinking that she might not find it expedient to engage us all, and that some of us had better look farther off for employers.”

“ There are the Visconti, the lords of Milan, who sent to us at Pisa a month ago, with offers of very fair pay. I and my comrades will even go thither,” said a German knight.

“There’s the Can della Scala at Verona, who would be glad of a lance or so. The Adige is as pleasant as the Arno: we will go to the Dog,” said a French Condottiero.

“I should like to try the Venetians: I am told their bank is as punctual, and their pay as high as the Florentines’,” said a third.

“There is the powerful family of the Este, who have the means of burnishing our armour,” said a fourth.

“And the Malatesta, the Lords of Rimini, and the Polenta of Ferrara, and the—”

“For my part, I am anxious for a greater change,” said Sir Robert, “and think I shall go on to offer my lance to the Pope, or perhaps to the Neapolitan king, at the end of Italy.”

“Not so—not so!” whispered one of his old countrymen to the ardent young knight; “you must with me to Florence, where the name alone of your uncle, the great Sir John Hawkwood, the Alexander or the Julius Cæsar of Condottieri, will procure you most honourable service and most favourable terms.”

After some time spent in representation and argument, Sir Robert was induced by his senior to prefer the service of Florence; and the other knights having made their arrangements, which

were, that some were to go to Venice and others to Milan, the party rose from the green sward on which they had been carousing and counselling, and mounted their horses.

The scene from which these adventurers now broke up, to descend together into the lower valley of the Arno, was a shady, verdant little glen in the Monte di San Giuliano, the Mount (in the words of the graphic Dante,)

“Perchè i Pisan veder Lucca non ponno,”*

and which presents itself as so grand an object from the towers of the two cities it divides from each other.

As the chief Condottieri, and men at arms, encased in armour, with their lances in their rest, descended the steep sides of the mountain, followed by their military attendants, their pack-horses, or mules, that carried the light wardrobes and moveable property of the adventurers, the people of Lucca watched them from their walls, and shut their gates as they drew near.

But this inhospitality did not affect the soldiers of fortune, who had no intention of halting there, but rode quietly on by the left of the town, and

* L' Inferno, canto xxxiii.

continued their journey along the valley, halting at evening,

“Come la mosca cede alla zanzara.”*

The Condottieri passed a joyous night at a delightful little village in the Val d'Arno, where they found in profusion that grand desideratum *il vin Aleatico*, both *dolce* and *asciutto*. The next morning they rode gaily on towards Florence, in the neighbourhood of which fair city, those of the adventurers who were bound to Milan and Venice separated from the rest.

The separation of these soldiers of fortune of different countries, whom chance had thrown together in Italy, and who had been closely associated for some months, was in as friendly and affectionate a spirit as could be well expected from men of their habits.

“Adieu! Franc-etrier!” said an English to a French soldier; “we have been comrades—the next time we may meet, it may be as enemies; but let us not forget the wine-cups we have pledged together, and that the hatred of our Italian employers is nothing to thee or to me!”

“Adieu, Brownlow!” replied the gay Frenchman; “the oldest friends must part! If we meet in the

* Dante.

melée, my lance shall pierce no armour of thine; and I count that thou wilt leave my doublet untouched!"

"Remember my good precepts," said the *cidevant* schoolmaster of Windsor to a sturdy German, who, in the ardour of his affection and leave-taking, had griped his hand until the tears stood in his eyes;—"remember my precepts, and that I have proved to thee mathematically, that there can come no good of our belabouring one another in other people's quarrels. No! no! we Condottieri ought to respect and support each other—to shed no more of our good blood than may be held in a cupping-glass—and always so to comport ourselves as to keep these signiors of Italians in constant need of our services, without giving to any one amongst them a decided preponderance!"

"Ay, ay!" added the lank Scotchman, who had expressed his preference of the things he had, to those he had not; "their weakness is our strength—their quarrels are our harvests! Should one of these Italian states ever prevail in the Peninsula, or should they ever have the good sense to make up their differences, or the courage to fight them out themselves—the calling of the Condottieri is at an end! But the two last cases are very unlikely to

happen. We can act in the spirit of our own interests; and forgetting we are English or Scotch, French or German, only bear in mind that we are met for one object in this rich and pleasant land—and so shall we continue to lead a pleasant life! Farewell, Franc-etrier, and bear in mind that when thou art in cash, thou owest me the value of a broad-sword!”

The farewell salutations of the superior Condottieri were accompanied by similar professions and good understanding; and with the convenient arrangement, that the leaders of the parties in the service of Milan, Venice, and Florence, should keep their old comrades (in a rival service) regularly informed of what should pass or be projected. This might prevent many an awkward crisis, and could not but be very convenient to all parties.

And in this manner did the Condottieri by degrees cajole their employers with a simulachre of warfare, frequently carrying on and concluding campaigns without drawing blood; until at last it became quite rare for a life to be lost in battle. The companies of adventure would meet and push each other off the field, as in a sham fight, whose movements and issue had all been previously arranged; and Machiavelli describes combats that

lasted all day, and ended in one or two men being wounded, and they not by sword or lance, perhaps, but from falls from their horses, or similar accidents.*

The old English knight had not over estimated the influence of Sir Robert's name and connexion with the admirable Hawkwood, or Acuto, as he was called by the Italians, who thus avoided a most awkward pronunciation, and gave a name expressive of the soldier's character. The Florentine Republic at once engaged him, with all the lances who followed him, giving very satisfactory pay, and placing the young knight in the most honourable rank of their mercenary captains.

The morning after his arrival and engagement; having paid a reverential visit to the tomb of his uncle, where his military ardour was re-awakened

* At the battle of Zagonara, which was celebrated all over Italy, Machiavelli says that no one died save Lodovico degli Obizzi and two of his men, who falling from their horses in marshy ground, were smothered in the mud!—*Ist. Fior.* lib. iv. At the battle of Molinella he says, nobody was killed.—*Lib.* vii. The historian Ammirato, who accuses Machiavelli of quizzing these inoffensive battles, and rendering the militia of the times more ridiculous than they deserved, admits himself that in an action between the Neapolitan and Papal troops (mainly composed of mercenaries), not only no one was killed, but not a man wounded, though the battle lasted all day!

by the sight of an equestrian statue the Republic had erected in gratitude for his services, he sallied forth with a brother Condottiero, a young Gascon; to take a view of the town of Florence. The admiration both of the Frenchman and Englishman was excited by the display of abundance, wealth, and luxury offered by this Italian city. The simplicity of the old citizens, so strikingly described by the Florentine chronicler, Giovanni Villani, had gone, and left no traces behind it. Instead of homely attire, the whole population, except the very menials, were clad in fine clothes, ornamented with fringe and gold; every citizen's wife they met, rustled in costly silks; and the magazines or shops everywhere dazzled their eyes with the treasures they contained. All this was the effect of the ingenuity, industry, and trade of the little Republic, which, spite of her eternal dissensions, had introduced wealth—and with wealth, luxury.

As Sir Robert went on lost in wonderment, his eye was attracted by some rare diamonds, and jewels, and *orfèvrerie* in the window of a splendid magazine; and he had stayed to gaze, when a glancing pair of black eyes entirely eclipsed those baubles. They belonged (the eyes, not the jewels) to a young Dama who was at that instant coming

out of the shop, and who seemed to be attracted or amused on her side by the animated curious face of the Gascon, or the fair yet manly countenance of the young Englishman, who fixed his large blue eyes on her black ones, as though he had been fascinated. The young lady, whose face was beautiful as her eyes were brilliant, remained for several seconds fixed, with her step half out of the door, her right-hand raised to her silken hood; she then walked on, drawing her hood, like a veil, over her head and face; but as she went, she turned round, again raised her silken hood, and a lovely smile was seen glancing in her eyes on one of the two Condottieri: it might indeed have been on *both*; but the Gascon, who had an excellent opinion of his own personal charms, determined it was exclusively on one, and that that *one* was himself. "Saint Denis!" he exclaimed, "didst ever see such eyes as those? didst mark how they dwelt on me? Allons! Sir Robert, and let us follow this fair Florentine! Tête Dieu! and what a pair of feet and ankles she shows! and look, she turns again to see whether I observe her!"

Without disputing his companion's monopoly of the young Dama's glances, Sir Robert, who was a modest if not a bashful fellow, went with the Gas-

con through the streets of Florence, both keeping their eyes fixed on the lady, who tripped along followed by an old governess and two serving-men. Fast however as she went, she found time, now and then, to turn round her head, and even to stop twice or thrice before some very pretty magazine, to see whose wares she was of course obliged just to withdraw her hood and to show her sweet face; and it some way or other happened each time, that ere she re-adjusted her modest head-covering, she sent a sunny smiling glance towards the young adventurers, each of which said glances the confident *avantageux* Gascon appropriated to himself, and chuckled over his *bonne fortune*. His satisfaction was however somewhat interrupted when he saw her presently after issue from a noble mansion to which they had traced her, and which they fancied to be her home, and, accompanied by a gallant-looking young Signior, take a street that terminated at one of the gates of the city, followed at a respectful distance by the old governess and three domestics with led-horses, evidently caparisoned, not for a promenade, but a journey.

"Is she going to leave us?" said Sir Robert.

"Lost as soon as found!" replied the Gascon.

"It should seem, however, young as she looks,

she is provided with a husband," said the Englishman.

"That spark is rather her brother," replied the Gascon. "See! he looks round at us, and his eye, his whole face, is as like her's as—but even if she had a—"

"She is mounting and off," interrupted the Englishman; and while he spoke, the fair Damina, assisted by the cavalier and a stepping-stone, found for the purpose near all the town-gates at the time, vaulted into the saddle, and patting an active little black palfrey on the neck, set off at a gay canter by the road that leads to the upper vale of the Arno. The cavalier and attendants mounted and followed; but as they went at a more sedate pace, the gay young lady presently wheeled round her palfrey and came to meet them. In doing this, her merry eye glanced again on the Condottieri, who had gone outside the gate and followed a few yards along the road; and as she did so, the confident Gascon, who still forgot they were *two*, and that the same looks might fall upon both, whispered to Sir Robert—

"Poor thing! poor thing! she is sorry to leave me, and will take another look!—only see how she gazes at me!"

As the back of the lady's cavalier and domestics were now towards him, whilst she faced him, the enterprising Gascon made a gallant sign to her with hand and lip. If this demonstration interested her at all, it certainly was not in her tender feelings, for her eye glanced more playfully than before, her lip curved into something more than a smile, and again pulling her hood over her face, she was heard to laugh aloud. She had now turned her horse's head, and still laughing was riding by the side of the cavalier, who anon turned his head round to look back at the object or objects that occasioned her mirth.

"By Saint George! and they are mocking us," said Sir Robert, with all an Englishman's susceptibility to the ridiculous. "Let us back to the city, since we have only come thus far to be laughed at!" and he went back to the gate through which they had just issued.

The Gascon had no notion that they could possibly be laughing at him, or that the Tuscan Damiana, or any other, could feel otherwise than flattered by his attentions; but he went after his comrade, whose more constrained demeanour, or less fashionable jerkin and cap and feather, he made amenable to the beautiful stranger's criticism or

mockery. When he had strode up to the gate where Sir Robert was now standing, he turned to honour the travellers with another look, but they were gone. They had taken a path to the right of the high road, and could no more be seen.

"Prithee, gentle Florentine!" he then inquired of an old man who was standing there, "who is that fair lady who rides forth so well accompanied? Is that her husband?—is she not a Florentine?—and is it many leagues off that she abideth?—and is she rich?—and is she—"

"Allegre!" said Sir Robert to his inquisitive companion; "thou confoundest our formal old friend by the multiplicity of thy questions;" and then he addressed the old man, and asked who the lady was that had just gone out by that gate.

"Great warriors!" replied the old Florentine, in a tone of natural politeness that was already becoming common among the people, and with a degree of formality, almost of pedantry, which later centuries have so much increased, that in speaking to the meanest man in Florence, you may now-a-days expect to hear him reply by syllogisms;—"Great warriors! that fair lady who rideth forth so well accompanied has no husband; she is no Florentine; the distance of her father's castle is

precisely four leagues and three-quarters from Florence ; and she would be rich even if her father had twelve other daughters and as many sons ; and of the latter he has only one—”

“The spark who rides by her bridle-rein,” said l’Allegre, interrupting him. “I told thee, Sir Robert, he was her brother !”

“The same,” continued the old Florentine, not ways disturbed by the Frenchman’s petulance and interruption ; “and of female progeny the Lord of Roccadura has but she, the gay young Giuliva.”

“A pretty name !” said the Gascon ; “and pray, who is the Lord of Roccadura, and where are his domains ?”

“The Lord of Roccadura !” said the old gossip. “By my faith ! bold Condottiero, and there be some in Florence who could tell you to their cost what the Signior of Roccadura is ! In spite of his gentle, laughing daughter you have seen here just now, and of his son, who is a well-disposed youth, and fonder of a ball and fête than a battle, old Roccadura is as fierce a Ghibelline lord as ever quarrelled with the Republic of Florence ! By San Lorenzo ! it was he who once fried half-a-dozen of his Guelf prisoners on a gridiron, and who, another time, leaguing with all the great Ghibelline

lords in the Apennines, ravaged all the territory round our city, even as far as the hill of Fiesole, and was very near surprising Florence herself, where he threatened to hang the priors of all the arts with shreds of their own articles or manufactures; and to drown half the rich, trading burghers who insulted the nobility of the land by their wealth and upstart pride. Ay! to drown them in the Arno, with their bales of merchandise about their necks!"

"Whew!" said the Condottieri; "this is a terrible man indeed! but how—where is Roccadura?"

"It is in the upper valley of the Arno; or, I should say more correctly, in the valley through which the brown Arno scatters the treasures of her waters to the occident, and where the said valley contracts; and precisely four leagues and three-quarters from this gate of Florence, there rises the steep and lofty mountain of Roccadura; and on that mountain, looking down into the said valley, there stands the baronial castle of the same name; and, by my faith! many in Florence wish it farther off!" said the precise old man.

"But if the Lord of Roccadura be so hated or feared, why come his children thus to the city?" inquired Sir Robert.

“Oh, noble sirs! the Republic hath now peace with the Ghibelline nobles, one and all,” said the old Florentine; “but God knows how long it may last!”

The Condottieri having obtained the information they wished, walked into Florence, l'Allegre still dwelling with undisturbed vanity on the attention he had attracted from the young Tuscan lady; and Sir Robert, without any of his confidence, treasuring the recollection of her beautiful face and eyes, and sighing to see them again.

Weeks and months, however, passed away; and many and many a walk and lounge was taken through the now familiar scenes of Florence's wealth and luxury, without offering again to the observation that “cunning piece of workmanship,” the lady Giuliva, with her laughing eyes and elastic step; and many a time and oft did a fair, light maiden vault to her palfrey's back by Florence's old gate, without showing the identical grace, or the bewitching face of the fierce Lord of Roccadura's gentle daughter.

In this interval, l'Allegre had made so many conquests of a like nature, which, however, be it said, nearly all ended in a like manner, in a saucy glance of the eye and a farewell laugh, that the recollec-

tion of the fair Ghibelline was almost effaced, when one morning Sir Robert, whose memory had been more retentive, informed him that the Florentine Republic had at length come to a determination, now that her power was so augmented, to subdue for ever all the troublesome Ghibelline nobles in her neighbourhood, and that she was forthwith to commence operations by sending a powerful body of the Condottieri in her pay against the castle of Roccadura.

"Felicitate me, my friend Sir Robert!" said the Gascon, after a moment's reflection,—*"felicitate me, for my fortune is made!"*

"In what manner?" inquired the Englishman.

"Dost not recollect the young Ghibelline who was so struck with me?"

Sir Robert might indeed say he did; for, though void of presumption, or even of hope, that image, as we have intimated, had never quitted his mind and heart.

"Well, then," continued l'Allegre confidently, "she will doubly make my fortune! The Castle of Roccadura, as strong, they tell me, as any in Tuscany—nay, in Italy, would set arms at defiance—but love shall open its gates. The Republic, that shall thus triumph through me, will reward

and honour me; and in the second place, the lady Giuliva shall be my wife; and I will allow the old baron, who is so fond of frying and drowning, five hundred crowns a-year out of his own rent-roll, to keep himself and son. Thou seest. I will be generous, good Sir Robert!"

"I do every justice to the generosity of thy intentions," said the English knight; "but I confess I cannot so readily conceive how thou art to make thyself master of the Castle of Roccadura, or—"

"A song—a song by moonlight, and the sight of my person, will do the business—the fair Ghibelline will give ingress to me—and I will give ingress to the gay Condottieri.—Dost see now, thou slow Englander!"

"I do!" replied Sir Robert, wondering at his companion's confidence; and then he added in a friendly feeling for his safety—for, in spite of the Gascon's foibles, he was a brave and a good fellow in the main, and the Englishman was really attached to him,—“But bethink thee, l'Allegre, of the danger of a failure in such an enterprise—the pretty black-eyed girl that might have liked thee well enough to smile on thee from the threshold of a jeweller's shop in Florence, may not like thee

quite enough to give thee secret admittance to her father's castle ; and then—"

"Leave that to me ! leave that to me !" interrupted l'Allegre : "if I have any knowledge in looks, those the young Ghibelline cast at me that day insure me success !"

Sir Robert, so modest was he, did not even think it hard that his companion should admit him to no participation in those gay looks of the Lady of Roccadura :—he only said, still in friendly regard to the Gascon's safety—

"But shouldst thou be surprised in the castle, and so admitted, and on such an errand, what fate canst thou expect ? Thou hast heard the savage character of the old Ghibelline lord !"

"Nor have I any reason to doubt the correctness of all we have heard of his cruelty, nor can I pretend not to make myself amenable to his vengeance, should I be detected in my work ; but the stake is worth the hazard of the game : thou hast not known terror often deter me, Sir Robert ; and though I should like an opener and more straightforward field of operation, as there can be no such, and nothing but a *ruse de guerre* can ever take that eagle's nest of a fortress, why I *will* take it by a fine story and a song ! Ay ! I will do and

dare all I proposed—so, say no more touching the matter, my loyal friend and true, an' thou hopest to empty a bumper at my marriage."

As the success of the Florentines depended, a good deal on the rapidity and secrecy of their movements, the Republic had no sooner decided on the measure of putting down the Ghibelline nobles, (who had so often and so long harassed them, devastating the country, interrupting the commercial communications of the high-roads, and retiring to their strongholds and fastnesses on the mountains, whence they derided the industrious burghers,) than they enrolled the greatest force they could obtain at the moment, and giving the command to the favourite Condottiero of the day, the English knight, desired him to hold himself in readiness to march at an hour's notice.

In the time that had elapsed since the convivial halt on Monte San Giuliano, with which this tale opened, many of the Condottieri, who had gone on other services to Milan and Venice, had again changed masters, some of them having been attracted to Florence by the fame of Sir Robert's success and the high consideration he enjoyed from the wealthy Republic. With these bold lances (for they could be bold when it suited them) the

English knight was already well acquainted, and he possessed every influence; though the same could hardly be said of a swarm of Catalans, Provençals, Germans, Italians, and non-descripts, who, under different Condottieri captains, now prepared to march in the service of Florence under his command.

When the secret orders came to march, and l'Allegre saw the fickle mercenaries mounting their horses, and the engines of attack, which supplied the place of artillery, drawn out to rumble in their rear, he could not repress a smile of contempt, and an observation to Sir Robert, that it was not by such means as those he would ever make himself master of Roccadura. And from what Sir Robert had heard of that castle, he was obliged to acquiesce, though the orders of the Republic were peremptory, and he must make an attempt on it ere he turned to others, which would be comparatively easy prey.

To avoid as much as possible attracting attention by these military preparations, the Condottieri were marched out through different gates of the city, in small troops at a time, with instructions, that after they had manœuvred round different parts of the town, they should concentrate in the upper valley of the Arno, towards sunset.

It was on a luxurious summer evening that, troop after troop, these Condottieri, clad in shining armour, and with their long lances resting on the stirrup-iron, and little banderoles floating from their bright steel heads, arrived in the peaceful valley of Italy's most classic river; and after having been hastily passed in review by the gallant English knight, rode after him and l'Allegre, who at the near approach of the trial he had determined to make, and that Sir Robert had sanctioned, was more confident and sanguine than ever.

The sun had sunk behind the mountains before the inspiriting word of command "march" was given; and as they advanced up the valley, they soon became engaged in the deep-blue and purple shades of evening. The bold rocks by the side of their road, or near at hand, retained the lingering of a greyish yet a warm light; the shelving hills with the olive groves, gardens and orchards on their sides, were coloured with a hazy blue, only here and there a white-faced cottage retaining light, or a loftier and rarer monastery on those hills' summits—the depth of the valley was covered with a mysterious-looking vapour, as with a veil, through which the winding Arno, still tinted with the golden hues of the departed luminary,

and here and there a farm-house, betrayed by its wreath of smoke, circling through the dilating vapour, were the only objects distinctly visible. At the head of the valley, or what seemed thence its termination, a sublime mass of mountain, with a golden, glorious atmosphere between it, and the nearer deep blue hills, still glowed with the departing radiance of an Italian sun, like the throne of a divinity who had but now vacated it, and left behind him half of his glorious reflex. As however, the Condottieri went along the Val d'Arno, in deep silence, and in perfect ignorance, save a captain or two, as to whither they were going, the radiance on the highest mountain's top died rapidly away; a deep purple followed the hues of crimson and gold and saffron, and the purple was succeeded by a greater depth of shade whose colour could not be defined; whilst in the vale below, the river and the curling smoke of the farm-houses disappeared, and on the hills, the cottages and the monasteries. The valley moreover contracting, and the hills and mountains becoming much loftier, the warriors soon rode on in disagreeable darkness. They had been for some time gradually ascending from the bed of the river, up the mountain's sides, when about three hours after

the commencement of the march, they halted on a sort of table-land, where they were illumined and cheered by the risen moon. Whilst the troops were busied in attending to their horses, that had been well breathed by their climb, Sir Robert and l'Allegre, and a subtle Florentine peasant, who had served them as guide, advanced to the edge of this natural esplanade, and fixed their eyes on the dark walls of an old castle, that seemed about as many roods above their heads, over which it rose, almost perpendicularly, as was the Arno beneath their feet.

"There 's Roccadura ! and, by my sword ! a hard rock it is !" said Sir Robert.

"And now, my gallant comrade, and somewhat commander, we must leave our horses here and climb silently up the mount's side through the ilex woods and the thick bushes, among which you will all lie in ambush, until I make you a signal from the old Ghibelline's castle !" said l'Allegre, without any diminution of confidence.

"The only approach we may hope to make without being perceived," said the guide, "is indeed in that mode and in this direction ; for, if we continue our way on horseback, and wind round and round the conical mount in our ascent, we may be dis-

covered a hundred times, though it is near midnight, and all seem so fast asleep in Roccadura!"

"Such an approach is not to be thought of!—Brave Sir Robert, *do* order on the troops to follow us! I am impatient to prove to thee that I can command success in this important enterprise!—I burn to clasp the lovely Ghibelline in my arms!" said the impetuous Gascon.

The English knight, then going back to the Condottieri, pointed to the fortress above their heads, and told them for the first time the object of their secret expedition.

At the sight of Roccadura's situation, on the peak of a break-neck mountain, that seemed to rise on every side almost like a wall, the boldest among them shook their heads, and some, as would oftentimes happen in these voluntary combinations of mercenaries, refused to have any thing to do in so ridiculous an enterprise. But when the Gascon expounded to them that the place was to be taken by a *ruse*, and not by force, they picketed their horses at the foot of the mount, and leaving a few soldiers to take care of them and secure their retreat, they followed the English knight and the sanguine l'Allegre, who climbed through the ilex wood with astonishing activity.

After proceeding for some time through the wood, the party came to the road which wound spirally round the mount. They crossed the road, and again entered among the thick trees, that terminated at the point where they again came upon the winding steep road. But beyond the road and the line where the ilex trees ended, the mount's sides were covered with thick bushes sufficiently high to mask the warrior's approach; and they continued their way together through them, till the road, which ran in closer diagonals as the cone contracted, was again before them. As they cast their eyes forward they perceived, that even the hardy vegetation through which they had been scrambling ceased a little beyond this part of the road, and that all the rest of the mountain was bare rock, with patches here and there of dark moss.

"My brave Sir Robert and his merry men all," said the confident Gascon, "will even halt here, where the bushes will conceal them until I make sure of one of the castle's portals. When I wave a torch or a lamp three times from those black walls, then will be the time to rush to my aid. The distance now is nothing!"

"But yet l'Allegre, before thou quittest me," said the English knight, "reflect once more on the

perils of thy enterprise. There ! do not frown. I know thou art brave, but yon baron is a cruel man, and the death thou mayest meet at his hands is not such as a warrior would suffer, and—”

“ Prithee, most considerate friend, say no more ! I am resolved, and confident of success. But even should I fail,—should the Ghibelline maiden scorn my music and my love, why then I shall not enter the castle walls, but be at liberty to scamper down the hill’s side and rejoin thee here. But the glances from the threshold of the jeweller’s shop, and the lingering eyes by the Florentine gate, make me sure of my game. When thou next seest me, Sir Robert, thou shalt felicitate me on the audacity of my love. ’Tis the southern tower, thou sayest, that the baron’s daughter dwelleth in ?”

“ The same,” replied the peasant guide ; “ and see ! by the Madonna, a light this moment glimmers from her lattice,—she will be for bed.”

While the peasant spoke, a rude clock in the castle sounded, in Italian time, four hours of the night, which at that season of the year was about midnight, and a faint light indeed gleamed in the southern tower of Roccadura.

“ That taper’s light is the harbinger of my happiness !” said the Gascon ; “ it leads me to love and

beauty!" and hanging a guitar round his neck,—the unwarlike instrument with which he was to take a fortress,—he bounded up the hill's side, with a heart as light as a gay tone of music.

When Sir Robert saw him thus approaching the castle, and the home of her whose exquisite black eyes and youthful happy face time had no power to obliterate, a new and a jealous feeling gained the mastery of his naturally modest, generous mind; and dreading now, not the danger and loss of his friend, he felt an exquisite apprehension that he would succeed;—and he felt, too, that *he* could not see without anguish, l'Allegre's success. He almost regretted he had not undertaken the project himself; for, after all, they were two, when they met the fair Ghibelline in Florence; and if she smiled, it might as well have been on him, as on his more confident companion. The hearty laugh with which she returned the Gascon's salutation, when on her road from Florence, certainly did not betoken she was much in love with *him* at the time. But his growing and too late regret that he himself had not volunteered to gain an entrance for his employers, the republicans of Florence, into the old noble's castle, through his daughter's heart, was stopped by an influx of chivalrous feeling,

which all his experience as a Condottiero and a mercenary could not extinguish entirely, and which now made him blush at such an attempt as ungenerous, dishonourable, treacherous — every way unworthy of an English knight. Still however he felt uneasy, unhappy; and it was only a return of the conviction that l'Allegre would fail — that he had miscalculated his influence on the fair Ghibelline, which gave him comfort.

But as he presently saw matters going on over his head, and under the castle's walls, there seemed every appearance that the adventurous l'Allegre would *not* fail.

On quitting his comrades, the Gascon strode up rapidly to the old fortress, which did any thing rather than smile a welcome; and he took his post at the foot of the southern tower, from which the light still gleamed. As soon as he had ascertained with his quick eye that no one was on guard, or moving on that side of the castle, he tuned his little guitar; and after a beautiful prelude, for the Condottiero had become an accomplished musician, he sang in his very best manner the most touching song he could remember, which was something like the following :—

“What pang is this, so keen, so deep?
Art thou that love I ne’er have known?—
If love thou art, still silent sleep,
And in my heart expire alone!

“Thy birth, alas! I had no power
To smother in this aching breast;—
But lone, and hidden, there expire,
Untold, unknown, unpitied rest.”

As the songster finished, the little light still beamed through the black walls; but no casement opened—nothing showed that the amorous melody was heeded.

“Is she asleep? is she deaf?” thought the impatient Gascon; “but I will try a higher key; and if she resist such singing as this—why she has no heart in her;” and he recommenced his ditty.

He had come to its modest, melancholy close, and was singing “untold, unknown, unpitied rest,” which he was giving with all his pathos, when a slight noise was heard overhead, and a beautiful young face, lit by the moon, which now rode in her glory opposite to the old tower, peered from the opened lattice.

“The bait hath taken,” chuckled the Gascon joyfully; “and now for a speech as touching as my song!”

"Who is it that throweth away such choice music on the mountain's top, and at such an hour as this?" said a silvery, playful voice. "Methinks for a silent, uncomplaining lover, as his song would give him to be, he singeth somewhat lustily?"

"Lady!" replied the Gascon, in a passionate tone, and with theatrical gestures to suit; "oh, lady! fairer and brighter than the moon that discloses thy peerless charms to thine adorer, I am he, the Condottiero of Florence, who months ago was blessed with the glances of thy dark eyes, when thou camest—a brighter jewel than any he could sell—from the old jeweller's shop in the street of the goldsmiths; and who never—no, never since that moment,—(the impudent, lying rogue, had made love to twenty, maids, wives, or widows, of all degrees, *ben contate*, since then!)—never hath ceased to think of thee, and to sigh for the moment when he might see those dear eyes again, and hear thee speak, as now he doth!"

"Didst buy that speech, Messer Condottiero, with thy song?" said the lady of Roccadura, "or is it the sentiment of thy heart?"

"Of my heart of hearts, fair lady!" replied the Gascon; but prithee let me in thy bower?—allow me nearer approach, that at thy feet I may pour out my adoration—my love!"

"Methinks one of thy calling, and in the service that thou art, would not be welcome in my father's castle," said the lady.

"Thy father need not know love's visit," said l'Allegre: "are not all asleep in the Castle?"

"All fast asleep!" replied Giuliva.

"Then, oh beautiful lady! give me but the end of a little cord, and I will climb those walls, and be in at thy window in a moment!"

"They say mystery adds to love's sweetness!" said the young Ghibelline, after a pause of a few moments.

"By Saint Denis! an apt scholar! she pants to receive me in her arms!" thought l'Allegre; and then addressing her, he added—

"Of a certainty it doth, most lovely, loving maiden; but the night wears on, and I am dying to kiss that lily hand!—only lower me a cord—a little coil of rope, and I—"

"But, alas! I have no rope," said Giuliva.

"Then knot the silken curtains of thy bed—they will be long enough to reach me—and strong enough, if they be woven in Florence."

"Long enough they are, and strong," replied the lady; "but dost think me Hercules' daughter, to suppose that I should be strong enough to pull up

a portly warrior, in a heavy iron jacket, like thee, as I should a bucket from a well !”

“ Thou hast but to make thine end fast to the frame of thy lattice, and that will do without thy labour, sweet lady ! but, an’ thou love me, make haste, for my heart is beating as loudly as that old bell that just told me it was midnight !”

“ Thou hast too humble a sense of thy merits,” said Giuliva, after another pause : “ and how canst thou doubt of the love of one who can even contemplate so bold and so naughty an exploit ! Why, what dost think thy fair dames of Florence would say if they heard of a baron’s daughter smuggling a lover into her father’s castle at the dead of night in this guise, by dangling him at her bed-curtains—oh, shocking !”

“ All is permitted to love—to young and passionate love !” said the Gascon ; “ and, from the moment that I have sighed my soul at thy feet, I will never cease to love thee !”

“ Ay ! thou wilt swear as much as that ? Wilt swear, that when I have been so naughty, thou wilt not do, as ’tis said men are wont to do—wilt never cease to love me !”

“ Lady, I do swear it !” said the Gascon, taking in vain the names of several very respectable saints.

“ Well, then, wait thee awhile, and I will go prepare love’s ladder !” and Giuliva quitted the window, and went into her room.

“ By all my past successes ! and I have not been a backward or unlucky lover,” mused the delighted l’Allegre, when she was gone : “ I could scarcely have expected to carry this choice fortress so soon—with the first—the very first coup-de-main ! And so young—and ought to be so innocent—and so lofty of lineage, and hitherto so pure of fame ! By my stars ! I am wonder-struck ! but there is no telling to what lengths woman will go for love. I shall make yon starch Englishman’s heart burst with envy when I show him all my triumph.”

He was left to these musings for some time. The Lady Giuliva returned not to the window. He walked impatiently up and down, and at last began to reproach himself for having made too sure of his conquest—to despair of her return, and even to fear some surprise from the castle. He drew his sword, and retreated some distance from the castle walls, to the declivity of the mount whence his retreat was free to his comrades. But at this moment the fair Ghibelline came to the casement loaded with the thick silk curtains of her bed, which she had tied together with great skill.

“ What art doing there, Messer Condottiero ?”

said she in a tone of alarm, "with that naughty sword?—put it up—put it up—the sight likes me not!" and then she added in her most playful manner, "Wouldst carve the moon with it, or kill all those little lizards that are creeping along in moon-shine?"

"Beautiful idol of my heart!" said l'Allegre, sheathing his heavy broad-sword, "I was only exercising my arm to still my heart so impatient at thy absence! But thou art here at last: throw down the silk, and in a moment I will be at thy dear feet!"

"Giuliva, who had secured the end of the curtains, threw them down. Their united lengths nearly reached the ground; and the Gascon, with a reasonable enough inquiry (considering he was to trust his neck to them), as to whether she had tied them tight, caught hold of them, and placing his feet in the interstices of the rough old wall, began his adventurous ascent.

When Sir Robert, who had been watching from the bushes below, and for some time smiling over the idea that the Gascon would be disappointed and return crest-fallen, saw him thus triumphantly climbing up to the lady's bower, where she stood expecting him, and evidently encouraging him in

his somewhat difficult labour, he almost gnashed his teeth with spite—he could not help saying aloud, “ Oh woman, woman ! who shall depend on thee, when one so young and noble does deeds like these ! resigning her honour, and perilling even her father’s life, for a stranger — a saucy-faced gallant like l’Allegre ! ”

But the happy Gascon, the while, had gained the high lattice—had leaped into her chamber, and was now at the Lady Giuliva’s feet, delivering the very best love-speech he had ever made.

“ Thank heaven ! I have thee safe ! But prithee rise, most gallant Sir, who riskest neck and limb for an undeserving lady, as though there were no such thing as breaking them—there, rise ! such an attitude becomes not so irresistible a lover as thou art—and, for the Madonna’s sake ! speak thy tender speech less loudly, and make less noise in kissing my hand ! ” said the fair Giuliva, who almost laughed as she spoke.

L’Allegre rose, and would have embraced his easily won mistress ; but Giuliva, with the activity of a fairy, escaped him, and going to the chamber door, whispered—“ Not here ! not here ! Messer ! —my nurse might wake and intrude. Up these stairs I have a more convenient trysting-place—

a bower for love, where no feet ever enter save mine !” and she playfully beckoned to l’Allegre, who hastily followed her on tip-toe.

Keeping always far in advance of him, and gliding with ease and speed over the rough stone steps of a dark staircase, whilst her ardent swain, less familiar with its mysteries, bruised his shins at almost every step he took, she stopped at last before a low door.

The moonlight entered here from the head of the staircase, which terminated a little higher up under the battlements of the tower ; and as the lady threw open the door, he saw a low narrow room that might be secret enough, but was by no means so comfortable as the apartment they had quitted. Giuliva stood on the threshold and again beckoned with her pretty little hand. With eagerness he rushed to the door, and entered with her.

“ Let me listen that all is still !” said his fair conductress, again evading his embrace, and gliding back to the door—which the next instant she closed upon him with a clap like thunder—a startling music which the astounded Condottiero heard the next instant, and before he could reach the door, followed by the still more alarming sounds of bolts and bars clattering without.

“ Ah! what means this?—gentle lady dost sport with me?—or am I, curses on my folly! indeed caught as in a trap?” cried he.

A most hearty peal of laughter was for some time his only reply; and then the fair Giuliva, putting her provoking face to an iron grated, narrow window, by the side of the well-secured door, addressed him in this consolatory language:—

“ Ay! caught!—caught in the trap of thine own egregious vanity! A prisoner in the castle that no doubt thou countest on betraying to thy masters, the dirty Florentine burghers!”

“ Nay, lady fair! thou canst not mean what thou sayest!—it was love for thee that brought me hither, and made me peril limbs and life, and—”

“ Art thou wont to carry an army with thee, when thou goest a wooing? and was it to witness thy love for me that those steel-clad soldiers that are hidden there in the bushes like robbers as they are, came all the way from Florence to Roccadura? Liar that thou art! As I looked out at my window on the fair moon, ere I should go to bed, I saw thy bands steal across the road and hide themselves in the bushes:—it is not now I had to learn the hatred of the Republicans to my noble Sire, and the infamous treachery to which they can resort against

their superiors. I watched thy approach, and though I could not have conceived thy presumptuous plan, I no sooner saw thy mode of attack, than I at once understood its object, and made a plan of mine own. Vain, confident idiot that thou art! to be thus entrapped by a girl like me."

"A thousand curses on thy treachery!" cried l'Allegre, who now beat his forehead and walked up and down the cell, in a state little short of madness.

"Who talks of treachery?" continued the Lady Giuliva: "doth it become thee, thou false loon and no knight!—thou who countedst on my dishonour, and by my love to betray my father, my brother, the fortress of my ancestors, that no foe could ever take? Oh fool! fool! and could thy matchless vanity so blind thee,—couldst thou really flatter thyself with such success,—and such infamy on my part for love of thee,—a stranger, an adventurer, a hired cut-throat in the pay of the plebeian Florentines?—ay, blush and hide thy recreant head!"

"Thou falser one than Dalilah," said the exquisitely mortified Condottiero, "did not thine eyes dwell on me with admiration in the streets of Florence, and—"

"On thee, thou ineffable coxcomb!" interrupted

the lady : " in sooth, I would not have looked twice on so swart and ill-favoured and swaggering a lout ! No ! I looked, and I will say it, with pleasure on thy blue-eyed, fair-haired, and modest comrade ! I laughed in contempt at thy forwardness and insolence. I admired *his* different demeanour as much as I did his superior person ; and if it be any consolation for thee to know it,—I tell thee that I felt a joy in my heart when I discovered that it was not he I entrapped and secured for my father's vengeance, but thou ! I tell thee, I would see *him* again,—see him in goodwill and friendliness, with as much pleasure as I shall see thee hanged like a dog from my ancestral turrets. I could have broken thy stupid neck when thou wast dangling in the air under my window ; but I preferred giving thee into the hands of my father, who will treat with thee to-morrow-morn, for I will not now disturb his rest for a paltry wretch like thee ! "

" I had better face the foul fiend himself than this fierce Baron of Roccadura," thought l'Allegre : " he will be for grilling me on his gridiron, as he did the Florentines ; " and then addressing the lady in the most dejected tone, he supplicated she would not be so cruel.

" And what fate was my father, my brother, to

expect from thee and thine and the treacherous Florentines?" replied Giuliva. "But good night! I wish thee joy of thy trysting-place, and a good sleep on the stony pavement of love's bower, and pleasant dreams! Again, good night!"

She began to descend the steps, but presently returned, laughing most heartily, and again spoke to her furious, mortified prisoner.

"Thou wilt remember thine oath—thou wilt never cease to love me—never! never!" said she; and renewing her laughter, she then ran down the dark staircase, regained her chamber, and placed herself at the lattice to see what the ambushed warriors might do.

For half an hour—for an hour, Sir Robert and the rest of the Condottieri waited with tolerable patience, only looking up now and then from the bushes at the old castle, where the light continued to glimmer from the southern tower, but then they began to be a-weary.

"By Saint Anthony, who loved a pig!" said one of the soldiers, who all perfectly understood the manœuvres abovehead, and the scaling of the wall by l'Allegre, and to what it was to lead,—“by Saint Anthony! and methinks our captain there spends too much time, making love to the Italian!"

“ Ay ! it may be all pleasant enough to him ; but curse me if 'tis very agreeable to us to be crouching here, holding a candle to his amours by the light of the moon ! ” said another ; “ he ought to have opened a postern-gate to us ere this ! ”

“ In good truth and the adventurous Gascon doth somewhat tarry ! ” said one of the superior officers, addressing the English knight.

Sir Robert thought so too ; but an apprehension he now began to feel, that his friend had not only not met the success he counted on, but might be in jeopardy, was certainly rendered less acute and painful to him, by his inward satisfaction that l'Allegre should have been defeated in an enterprise that would have thwarted his own happiness — his love ; for, from the moment the Gascon had entered the Lady Giuliva's bower, the violence of his feelings did not permit him to doubt that they really originated in love. He had however his duty to perform as commander of the expedition. He said something to give patience to his troops, and let another irksome half-hour pass away. At the expiration of that time it was no longer possible to restrain the impatient Condottieri, and he was obliged to consent to some two or three of them approaching nearer to the old fortress to see,

if they could, what had become of l'Allegre, and what was passing therein.

The lady, who was keeping her lonely watch, saw these fellows climb up the hill and crouch under the old walls. She then opened her lattice and addressed them.

"Go back, cowardly varlets!" said she; "your treacherous captain has been entrapped by me, and is now my prisoner in a dungeon, from which you have no power to save him. Go back! and tell your lurking comrades there that the Lady Giuliva, in the name of her father the Baron of Roccadura scorns their arts and defies their arms."

The Condottieri, as if panic-struck by what had befallen one of their favourite leaders, and by the manner and tone of a woman, ran down the mountain's side to do her bidding; and on their departure Giuliva went and roused her father and brother, and informed them of all that had happened. Their admiration at her presence of mind and skill was only equalled by their wrath against the presumptuous l'Allegre, whom they would have put to death at once, if it had not been for her representations. But return we to the Condottieri.

No sooner had Sir Robert received the half-expected intelligence, than, to do his duty by his

employers, or to have the appearance of doing it, and all that could be done against Roccadura, whose position he found quite as strong as it had been reported to be, he dispatched the mass of his men to bring the heavy besieging engines up the mountain by the road, whilst he prepared to secure with the rest the upper part of the mount under the castle walls.

Before the battering-rams and other heavy and awkward machines could be brought up the steep road, which in many places was no road at all, but an abraded water-course, through which, in the rainy season of the year, the mountain torrents descended impetuously towards the Val d'Arno, the day began to dawn, and the sun had risen over the Eastern Apennines and illuminated all the romantic scene, as Sir Robert drew out his hostile array before the old castle, which was summoned by a herald to surrender to the Florentine Republic.

Within the frowning old castle every thing had remained in perfect stillness until that summons, only a few men being seen now and then peeping over the battlements at the Condottieri; but as the herald finished his last flourish, the fierce old Baron of Roccadura and his son, and a host of vassals in armour, appeared at the summit of the

southern tower, with the captive Gascon, bound hand and foot, and trembling in the midst of them.

This was an interesting moment, and the fierce Ghibelline's speech deserved the silence it met with. The speech was very short.

"This is my answer," said he, pointing to l'Allegre, who felt an uneasy sensation about his neck as the Baron spoke: "I will hang this villain of yours from the top of this tower if you do not instantly break up from Roccadura and return to your tradesmen of Florence!"

Sir Robert, as commander of the expedition, found himself in a very awkward dilemma. After some minutes of reflection, he advanced in front of his men, and said aloud—

"Think what thou dost, my Lord of Roccadura! Such a deed will bring down death on the head of thee and all of thine, when we storm thy castle!"

"Storm Roccadura!" replied the Baron with a laugh: "when thou dost, 'tis well! But thou canst force no entrance here, and thou knowest it:—for, see! the rock round my castle walls scarcely allows thee breadth enough to place thy stupid engines—thou never canst work them where they are!"

Now all this was perfectly true. Indeed Sir Robert saw his instruments of attack, many of

which he had not been able to get up the mountain at all, so badly placed that they seemed every moment on the point of making a precipitous retreat down the steep and slippery rocks. He could not, however, give up the business at once; and he added to the Ghibelline—

“Then will I beleaguer thee, until famine forces thee to surrender; and then, if thou hurtest but a hair of my fellow-soldier’s head, I will hang thee from the battlements where thou standest!”

Another loud laugh, which was echoed by all those on the southern tower, except l’Allegre, who, perhaps for the first time in his life, was in a very serious mood, was for some moments the only answer the Condottieri received. Then the Baron said—

“The magazines of my castle could furnish daily, and for a whole year at least, a hundred such repasts as are eaten by any one of thy parsimonious burghers of Florence! Wouldst pitch thy tent a year on this mountain-top?—But, by Heaven! thou shalt not hinder our egress a day—another hour! Nay! an’ thou departest not forthwith, with thy hungry ruffians at thy heels, I will do something worse than hanging to this window-scaler!”

“Sir Robert! my dear friend Sir Robert!” exclaimed the Gascon, “he will most assuredly do

me on his gridiron if thou dost not beat a retreat, which I intreat thee to do, for the devil is in this castle, and in every one about it,—and if thou stayest, and I am roasted to a cinder, Roccadura will never be taken !”

“Well ! said Sir Robert, “if the Baron will restore thee, my gallant comrade, to liberty, we will forthwith carry our arms elsewhere.”

“’Tis not for thee to make but to receive conditions,” replied the old Ghibelline, “and I have the intention of retaining my captive for another occasion : I will hang him, or, as I said before, do worse by him an’ thou departest not.”

“A dungeon is better than death,” cried l’Allegre : “better times will come for a man of my merits ; but prithee, Sir Robert, by the love thou bearest me, break up hence ! Think of the gridiron, dear Sir Robert !”

“We will not have our gay captain sacrificed !” exclaimed many of the Condottieri. “Let us depart !”

Sir Robert felt nothing was to be done but this, and making something like a stipulation with the fierce Baron, that he would at least treat his prisoner leniently until such times as his ransom might be procured, or peace made with the Floren-

tine Republic, he gave the word of command, which was speedily obeyed by the troops, who began to lower their battering and other engines down the mountain, or to betake themselves to the road.

The English knight took a kind farewell of the Gascon, and was turning away from the castle, when the Lady Giuliva, who had been for some time watching him from among the crowd on the tower, stayed his steps by saying—

“I will be thy guarantee, thou tender-hearted knight! that thy comrade here, rogue as he is, be well treated. Ay! he shall keep his guitar with him, and sing away in his cell here like a black-bird in its cage, and as many love-songs as he chooses: though maugre he hath sworn to love me ever, I cannot promise to listen to them.”

At the sounds of that silvery, playful voice, Sir Robert looked up: the lady had advanced to the edge of the battlements of the tower, and he saw again that lovely, youthful face, and those peculiar eyes which had so fascinated him, though they had given him none of the confidence of l'Allegre. He stood for some time riveted to the spot: every other object on earth disappeared from his eyes,—every other thought, every feeling of mortification at his want of success in the expedition entrusted

to him, absented itself from his mind ; and he only gazed, and loved, and fancied, that could he but see the lady once, only once a day, even at as great a distance as now he saw her, he would prefer l'Allegre's captivity to his own liberty. For some time he could not reply to Giuliva's speech, which, though mocking to the Gascon, was meant in kindness to his handsomer friend, and expressed her real intention to procure lenient treatment for the prisoner *she* had made. Even when Sir Robert did speak, his words were confused, and contained no intelligible sentiment, save that mercy became the fair, and that his arm should ever be at the service of the gentle, generous being who would extend it to his comrade. With a modest salutation and a last look, that though he was perhaps unconscious of its eloquence, spoke more than words to the young Ghibelline's heart, he then followed his men, but frequently, and even after every body had disappeared from the walls, he turned his head as he descended the mountain, towards the Castle of Roccadura, which he had not only failed in taking, but had left his heart as much a prisoner in it, as was his comrade's person.

Sir Robert's failure in this difficult undertaking did not injure his reputation, nor prevent the

Florentines from immediately employing him again. He was met in the Val d'Arno by a commissary of the Republic and a reinforcement of several fresh lances of Condottieri, with orders to march at once against another Ghibelline castle of somewhat easier access than Roccadura. In this second enterprise he was fortunate, nor did his fortune abandon him, until one after the other, all the castles of the nobles on the Apennines, that overlooked and awed the dominions of the Florentine Republic, were subdued.

Left almost to himself, with the wily burghers of Florence preventing the sale of the produce of his estates, and finally even his descent from the castle or the mountain-top, the old Ghibelline Roccadura, who still held l'Allegre prisoner, was inclined to treat, and to be somewhat more courteous in his parleys than he had been on a former occasion. It was but fitting that he who had performed the rest of the service, though he had been foiled in this, should have the honour of receiving the surrender of the last of the Ghibellines. The handsome English knight was therefore dispatched with the conditions of the Florentines; and as he comported himself in an amiable manner, and even procured more favourable terms than the old Baron could

have expected, he was not only admitted into the castle, but received very shortly after as the suitor of the Lady Giuliva. The crest-fallen l'Allegre, who had been treated quite as mildly, and in every way, as the lady had promised, was liberated and sent to Florence with Sir Robert's dispatches, and the information that, with the kind permission of his employers, he should in a few days make the young Ghibelline his wife.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

Sixteenth Century.

A.D. 1500 to 1600.

ITALY was now to be the scene of contests of greater magnitude than she had witnessed since the days of Charlemagne. The wars of one miniature state with another, the feuds of cities, the restless intrigues of all, were now to be lost in the contemplation of the wars and ambition of great potentates from beyond the Alps. But there is no patriotic or national charm to spread over these struggles, which, spite of their magnitude, will interest us less than the former fortunes of Italy, when we could yet hope that her insane dissensions might terminate in a confederation for the support of the general independence of the peninsula, and the rational policy of excluding foreign interference and arms.

But the Italians had thrown away their golden opportunity. They continued dissevered, while the great Ultramontane nations, gradually triumphing over the feudal system, which had kept them weak, consolidated their strength, effected a unity of government and purpose, and formed standing national armies, superior in number and in quality to those that had preceded.

If craft and cunning—if all the subtleties of politics—if a Machiavelism deep and remorseless, that was capable of all treachery, that hesitated at no crime, could have availed Italy, she had been saved. “But,” to use the impressive language of Mr. Hallam, “it is the will of Providence that the highest and surest wisdom, even in matters of policy, should never be unconnected with virtue.”*

* Middle Ages, chap. iii. part 2.

And virtue had long been exiled from the councils of the Italians, who had become incapable of that high and sure wisdom.

Other circumstances however, to which sufficient weight does not appear to be generally given, contributed to the rapid decline of Italy. One of her ingenious sons had discovered a New World, but this glory was dearly bought; for the precious metals, that almost immediately flowed thence into other countries, materially changed the economy of the times, and enriched those countries from sources Italy was a stranger to. Much of this gold and silver might have found its way to the marts of the commercial, enterprising Italians; but it happened unfortunately for them, that the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope was discovered shortly after, and diverted the rich trade of the East from Italy,—which monopolized trade, from the eleventh century and the time of the crusades, had poured a continuous stream of wealth into her lap. The Reformation stopped other currents at their fountain head. The ecclesiastical revenues of a great part of Europe were at once subtracted from Rome, that thus lost a great portion of what we may term the “wealth of superstition.”

1500. Alexander VI. succeeded in establishing his son Cæsar Borgia in the Duchy of Romagna: they obtained their object by a system of most atrocious and perfidious policy, the latter inveighing and murdering the principal feudal lords of the territory. Cæsar Borgia was supported in these aggressions by Louis XII. of France.

The Pope died two years later of poison, which he had destined for another, and his death involved the ruin of Cæsar Borgia, who terminated his flagitious life in a field of battle in Spain.

1501. Louis XII. invaded Naples, and an iniquitous alliance

was formed between him and Ferdinand of Arragon (who had engaged to defend Naples,) for the partition of that kingdom. Frederic of Naples threw himself on the generosity of Louis, who assigned him the duchy of Anjou. His eldest son was sent prisoner to Spain, and the Arragonese dynasty of Naples ceased to reign. A.D. 1501.

The French and Spaniards quarrelled over the spoil. The French were completely defeated at Cerignola, and on the Garigliano. 1502. 1503.

Pope Julius II. annexed Bologna and Perugia to the Papal dominion. 1506.

Pisa was finally subjugated by the Florentines. 1509.

The celebrated league of Cambray having been formed by the Pope, the Emperor and the Kings of France and Spain, against Venice, that territory was invaded by Louis XII., who totally defeated the Venetian army at Aignadello. The Republic made peace with the Pope and the King of Spain, and the Emperor Maximilian was discomfited before Padua.

The Pope and the King of Spain made war on Louis, but were defeated at Ravenna by the gallant Gaston de Foix, who was killed in the battle. The Emperor Maximilian joined the League against the French, who were expelled from Italy; and Maximilian Sforza obtained possession of the duchy of Milan. 1511. 1512.

Leo X. was elected Pope, and his family (the Medici) regained their supremacy at Florence.

The French were defeated at Novara by the Swiss. 1513.

Peace was concluded between Louis and the Pope. 1514.

The French again obtained possession of Milan. 1515.

The treaty of Noyon, between Francis I. and Charles King of Spain, and the pacification between the Emperor and Venice gave general peace to Italy. 1517.

- A.D. 1521. The Pope and the Emperor Charles V. confederated against the French and drove them from the Milanese.
- Adrian VI. succeeded Leo, and within two years was succeeded by Clement VII. of the Medici family.
1524. The French, after sustaining a variety of reverses in Lombardy, were completely beaten at Pavia, where Francis I. was made prisoner.
1526. The Pope, Florence and Venice, confederated with Francis to drive the Emperor's forces from Italy, and replace Sforza in the Milanese.
1527. Rome was sacked by the Imperialists, and the Pope made prisoner: the unfortunate city suffered every horror which the presence of a licentious soldiery, during ten months, can inflict.
1528. Andrew Doria expelled the French from Genoa, and gave freedom to his native country.
1529. General peace was established in Italy. The Emperor was crowned by the Pope at Bologna, and established a complete ascendancy in Italy.
- The Medici family, who had been expelled from Florence by the Republican party, on the taking of Rome, again endeavoured to regain their authority there. They were assisted by the Imperial forces; and Florence, after a gallant resistance, was obliged to capitulate: the capitulation was shamefully violated, and Alessandro de' Medici was declared the first Duke of Florence, and the Republic finally suppressed.
1535. Francis I. renewed hostilities, and claimed Milan on the death of Sforza, but the peace of Crespi left the political state of Italy again under the entire control of the Emperor.
1544. Parma and Placentia erected into a sovereign duchy by Pope Paul III., in favour of his natural son Pietro Luigi Farnese.

Pope Paul IV. allied himself with Henry II. of France, A.D. 1555.
against the Emperor and Philip II. of Spain.

The French army being obliged to leave Italy, the Pope 1557.
made peace with Philip II. who sought pardon and absolution from the Pontiff, for having defended himself against unjust aggressions.

The treaty of Cateau Cambresis, regulated on a more 1559.
certain basis the previously varying limits of the Italian States. It confirmed the cession of Sienna to the Medici family, who now obtained possession of almost the whole of Tuscany, and left Naples and the Duchy of Milan, under the recognised sovereignty of Spain.

“From the epoch of the treaty of Cateau Cambresis to the close of the sixteenth century, Italy remained, in one sense, in profound and uninterrupted peace. During this long period of forty-one years, her provinces were neither troubled by a single invasion of foreign armies, nor by any hostilities of importance between her own feeble and nerveless powers. But this half century presented, nevertheless, any thing rather than the aspect of public happiness and prosperity: her wretched people enjoyed none of the real blessings of peace. Subject either to the oppressive yoke of their native despots, or to the more general influence of the arch-tyrant of Spain, they were abandoned to all the exactions of arbitrary government, and compelled to lavish their blood in foreign wars and in quarrels not their own.

“The Italians, it is true, were taught in these foreign contests, to resume their post among the military of Europe, but their suffering country groaned under an iron yoke, while her coasts, left without troops or defences, were insulted and ravaged by the corsairs of Turkey and Barbary. Her tyrants, while they denied people the

A.D. power of defending themselves, were unable or careless to
1559. afford them protection and safety.

“While the people of Naples and Milan in general tamely submitted to these inflictions of misgovernment, it is singular and worthy of remark, that they steadily and boldly opposed the attempt to establish the Inquisition upon the same footing as in Spain. Nobles and people firmly agreed in resisting this aggravation of their sufferings. Ferdinand and Charles V. both attempted and were obliged to renounce this project in regard to Naples, and although Philip II. eagerly desired it, such violent and alarming remonstrances from the citizens of the capital followed the bare rumour of his intentions, that he was induced to deny that he had ever entertained them.

“In the Milanese duchy, the Italian Inquisition was already established; but its operations did not satisfy the relentless and gloomy severity of Philip II. and he obtained a Bull from the Pope, which authorized the remodelling of that tribunal on the Spanish plan. The people however prepared to resist the innovation with arms in their hands, and their Governor, the Duke of Sessa, succeeded in dissuading his sovereign from prosecuting the measure, before it had produced the same scenes of commotion and bloodshed which had occurred sixteen years before at Naples.”*

1571. The Christian powers having been induced, with some difficulty, to league with Venice against the Infidels, who were at this moment infesting the Ionian sea with a tremendous fleet of two hundred and fifty galleys, the celebrated battle of Lepanto was fought near the ancient promontory of Actium,—famous for the victory obtained

* Mr. Perceval's History of Italy.

by Augustus over Antony, and for the only naval battle, ^{A.D.} says Daru, which ever decided the fate of an empire. ^{1571.} The glory of the victory of Lepanto was principally due to the Venetians, but they could not keep the league together, or reap those advantages from it which they ought to have done. On the contrary, two years after, they were fain to secure peace with the Turks by the cession of Cyprus—a beautiful kingdom they had obtained fraudulently, and now lost ingloriously.

The sixteenth century, which we introduced with melancholy reflections, and have now brought to a close, was however, for literature and the arts, the most glorious that Italy has ever seen. In spite of their vices and coming misfortunes, nearly every state had its Pericles; and Leo X. at Rome might even represent Augustus. As if to cast a halo of imperishable glory over her decline, men of the highest genius in every department rose and flourished in numbers that astonish us. One of those great names would have rendered the age worthy of the eternal recollections of posterity; an Ariosto, a Tasso, a Machiavelli, a Guicciardini, a Raphael, a Michel Angelo, a Benvenuto Cellini, a Palladio, a Vignola, would of itself have been title sufficient to that undying glory; but the sixteenth century saw all these luminaries shining together, with a host of satellites, that would only be deemed inferior planets by being placed in immediate comparison with their great coteremporaries.

The Conspiracy of the Fieschi.

Ecco vediam la maestosa immensa
Città, che al mar le sponde, il dorso ai monti
Occupà tutta, e tutta a cerchio adorna.

BETTINELLI.

Che le terre d' Italia tutte piene
Son di tiranni, ed un Marcel diventa
Ogni villan che parteggiando viene.

DANTE.



The Conspiracy of the Fieschi.

WHAT traveller that has performed the journey between Turin and Genoa, crossing the Apennines that separate the rich plains of Piedmont from the two Riviere and the sea, but remembers with undiminishing delight the views he caught from the lofty pass of the Bocchetta, with a glimpse of the blue Mediterranean (perhaps his first glimpse of that beautiful classical sea!) offering itself to his eye in the distance? After passing the little old town and mountain fortress of Gavi, with its ruined fortifications and riven towers, and going through the large village of Voltaggio, the wayfarer reaches the narrow, rough opening just where the mountains are piled in the most striking and picturesque confusion, and through this close pass, as through a loop-hole, he may gaze over a most enchanting scene.

The descent from this pass is very rapid; but

soon the steep, rough, lofty mount (crowned by the celebrated batteries of the *Sprone*, and a long continuation of towers and walls) against which proud Genoa leans her shoulders, offers itself to the eye, with a variety of mountain scenery equal to any in the lesser Alps. Watch-towers, that perch on the points and angles, church spires, white villages, and country mansions, that rise from the midst of woods of chesnut and oak, or peep between the boles and interstices of the trees, cattle and flocks grazing on the flats, and goats that sound their rustic bells on the cliffs above, clear waters which throw themselves down the steep rocks, or babble along narrow deep valleys—such are among the components of those scenes, and the approach to Genova la Superba! *

At the foot of the Bocchetta, the Val di Polcevera winds round the roots of the mountains that shut in the magnificent city. This valley is exceedingly populous: village succeeds to village with little intermission; the number of old villas

* A new road has been made which winds through the valleys. The traveller now escapes the ruggedness of the pass of the Bocchetta, and loses the beautiful views. I should always prefer the old mountain road, which I have twice taken on foot.

and country houses, all fantastically painted on the outside, is astonishing, and conveys an imposing idea of the former affluence and splendour of the Republic. But of all the villages in this beautiful valley, Campo Marone is, as it *was* at the date of our story, by far the most conspicuous. Here the noblest and richest of the patricians of Genoa resided in preference, at the seasons of their *villeggiatura*; and during the heats of summer the magnificent maroni, or chesnut-trees, from which the village derived its name and much of its beauty, retained a sylvan freshness, which was most delicious, compared with the atmosphere of the closely built city, or the more exposed districts of the *riviere* in the immediate vicinity of Genoa.

The most elegant of the villas of Campo Marone was that of Bernardino Spinola. It was not situated in the village, or among the grey edifices that were closely clustered on the shelving hill immediately above it, but stood apart, on a higher and lonelier part of the mountain, concealed, except to the eye of one who approached very near, by a thick wood. There was nothing to strike the vulgar eye in the exterior of this building, for classical purity and taste have an unobtrusiveness and quietness about them, that only the refined

can appreciate, and *that* by a slow and gentle process of the mind, which partakes of nothing startling, or sudden, or emphatic. The true, the pure, and essentially elegant in art wins upon us by degrees like the gentle breeze of evening; it is the false, the irregular, and exaggerated that strikes like the wind of the tempest. There was scarcely one villa in or about Campo Marone but with its stuccoed and bright painted front would have been preferred by the vulgar to that of Bernardino Spinola, with its simple marble façade. The eye of taste, however, could dwell with calm delight on its antique and Grecian grace, and estimate aright the arrangement and beauty of its interior, which was not crowded, but occupied in just proportions by the most exquisite works of art, from the chisel of old Hellas, or the pencil of her successor—perhaps her rival—modern Italy.

The villa, in position and character, accorded in a wonderful degree with the retiring, refined nature of its occupant.

Bernardino Spinola was connected with the noblest of the Patrician families of Genoa, and had been left at an early age the uncontrolled master of himself and of one of those splendid fortunes which the commerce of the enterprising Republic,

had made frequent among its subjects. It has been said by a noble of our own days and our own country, who bitterly felt all the melancholy truth of his assertion, that this lordship of oneself, under such circumstances as those of the young Genoese, is "a heritage of woe," and Bernardino was well nigh forming no exception to the general lot.

With the most ample means of purchasing every sensual enjoyment, and of making himself the arbiter of a seducing society of the young, the thoughtless, the dissipated, the dependent, he drank deep of the cup of dissipation. But the very facility of procuring all these enjoyments caused them to pall upon his appetite, and, fortunately for him, there was a spring in his mind which prevented his carrying them to a satiety which would have ended in misanthropy or apathy, and that animated him with loftier aspirations, and to the pursuits of those pleasures which gold could not buy, nor familiarity render insipid. He broke at once the enfeebled links of the spell-chain that had bound him, only as the hunter's net, the lion while he was sleeping, and renouncing the fascinations of the wine-cup and the midnight revel, the courtesan and the still more dangerous intrigue, betook himself to a life of study and travel. After having

resided some time in the different universities of Italy, he visited in succession nearly every country in Europe, and at the period of the present tale, or in the year one thousand five hundred and forty-six, he had but recently returned from a long and very solitary residence in Greece, where his classical predilections had detained him, month after month, and whence he had been only torn at last by important business regarding his fortune, which he had left in the hands of trustees, that required his presence at Genoa.

The course of life he had led—his studious and retired habits, his long, lonely travels, his seclusion in those fallen but still beautiful regions where every mountain and every vale, every desolated object of antiquity, nay, every stone, gave rise to a deep feeling—his abstractions and imaginative indulgences had purified his heart and refined his intellect; but at the same time they had induced an over delicacy and sensibility that somewhat unfitted him to mix in the every-day concerns of life—which, after all, and unpoetical as they may be, are concerns in which we *ought* to take a part and interest, in justice to that society of which we form a portion, and particularly so, if, as in Bernardino's case, we enjoy in that society the advantages of birth, distinction, and wealth.

The friends who had pressed his return, expected that from his position, and the knowledge and experience he had acquired of the different governments of Europe, he would actively engage himself in the affairs of his own country; but he had disqualified himself for the politics of the Genoese Republic, and for cramped and confined Italian politics in general, by his contemplations of a higher order of things, and by his adoration of some of the great characters of Ancient Greece and Rome, compared to whom, the public men of his day and country sank into puppets. The circumstances of the times were indeed such as might have chilled the energies of a less susceptible and more ardent man. The artful game that had been carrying on between the little states of Italy was now thrown from the table by the intervention of the great nations beyond the Alps. Charles V. and Francis I. were disputing the mastery of Italy: —the hopes that might have cheered many a generous spirit, of the union and independence of the Italians generally, were now blighted; and Bernardino could not interest himself much in the chances of their masters,—or whether the Emperor or King obtained the supremacy. Moreover, he could not help feeling that this humiliating crisis had been

produced by the public and private vices of his countrymen;—he could not avoid seeing that these vices were persevered in, and that the whole course of public affairs was a tissue of craft and dishonour. Had a new Cola Rienzi arisen, with more virtue and consistency of character than that tribune,—had a grand scheme been produced for the relieving of the whole of Italy from foreign thralldom, Bernardino might have staked his fortune and life, with a bounding heart;—though it must be remarked, whilst his imagination had formed too high a Utopia, his early and unfortunate experience of men made him doubtful of the engines with which he would have to work, and that he had none of that youthful hope, that lively assurance, which is the pledge of success.”

As it was, with all his talents and acquirements, no one was less a man of the world than Bernardino Spinola, or less calculated to lead to those changes in men and measures that he sighed for. In his more private feelings, he was still more remote from the worldly scale. With an ardent temperament and imagination, with a disposition to love, with the “necessity of loving” strong within him, he had formed to himself an ideal idol, and worshipping it, in the true spirit of Platonism, (which

in the sixteenth century was perhaps not so general in Italy as in the fourteenth, but which still obtained among many,) he had shunned for some years all intercourse with any fair objects less unreal.

According to the fanciful philosophy of Plato, in whose study Bernardino had passed so many hours, "Our souls emanate from God, and unto him they return again. They are pre-existent to our bodies in other worlds. They are more or less perfect, and the most perfect love those which are most perfect also. They are connected in pairs by a predestined and immutable sympathy: without partaking of the sensual perturbations of the body, they are necessitated to follow it blindly, led by fatality or chance, for the procreation of the species. Each soul burns with the desire to find its companion; and when they do meet together in their pilgrimage on earth, their love becomes so much the more ardent, because the matter by which they are enclosed prevents their re-union. On these occasions their pleasures, their sufferings, their ecstasies, are inexpressible; each endeavours to make itself known to the other; a celestial light burns in the eyes; an immortal beauty beams in the countenance; the heart feels less tendency to earth, and they mutually incite each other to the

exaltation and purification of their virtue. In proportion as they love each other, they are lifted towards God, who is their common origin; and in proportion as they feel the pains of their exile upon earth, and their captivity in matter, they desire to be freed, in order that they may unite eternally in Heaven."*

Now Bernardino, when imbued with these notions, and with the ardour and imaginativeness of youth little diminished, had seen, or fancied he had seen, in a foreign land the object of this "immutable sympathy," his soul's partner. Already a nun, the virgin spouse of God, their meeting and mingling on earth with "ecstasies inexpressible," must be impossible; but like Petrarca, his favourite poet, as he who had carried the Platonics of love to their greatest extent,—like Petrarca, who was separated from his Laura by a less sacred and less insurmountable barrier, Bernardino could continue to adore until death, and then the pre-existent soul would be united with its pre-existent partner in "the third Heaven!" Indeed, it was the very impossibility of their union on earth, the impossibility of ever seeing or knowing more of his spiritual mistress than he obtained at a short glance, in

* Ugo Foscolo. Essays on Petrarch.

which he had fancied however all the endeavours of her soul to make itself known to his, all the celestial light in the eye, all the immortal beauty in the countenance, which entered into his system, that fostered the imaginative idol of his heart, and gave strength to his captivation.

Had the fanciful young man mingled much in society, and taken an active part in worldly affairs immediately after the casual rencounter, his impression might have been weakened or effaced; but his lonely, musing travels, and the secluded life he led for so long a time, so deepened their traces, that he fancied they were now indelible, and that whatever chance or fatality might do with his body (the one or the other had led the Platonic Petrarca's into an amour, the fruit of which was an illegitimate child!) his soul would remain divorced on earth, from love. Since his return to Genoa, he had seen more of men and of women too; and as the fair Genoese are among the fairest of Italians, and he had stood their charms heart-whole, he might be the more confirmed in his theory.

Bernardino was in this frame of mind when one lovely summer evening he went out from his elegant house into his gardens, where, after walking for a while, he sat himself down in a bower that

faced the setting sun, and whiled away the time in musing and music. His fancies turned, as usual, to that important point of his life in which he had seen his predestined love: he sang the following simple verses descriptive of that meeting, which, so *simple* in itself, had become so complicate in his theory, and so important in his imagination.

I can ne'er forget that moment,
In a Gothic church of Spain,
'Neath a roof all-arch'd and towering,
Dimly lit through colour'd pane.

The chaunted mass was finished,
Yet its echoes seem'd to stay
Among those aisles and columns tall,
Where few remain'd to pray.

The incense still was floating there
Like breath of Eastern clime;
And the grey belfrey overhead
Toll'd slow its solemn chime.

The dark veil'd nuns had left their seats
In the grated gallery,
And ta'en their way unto their cells,
Headed by their proud ladie.

I stood behind the altar high,
Looking through a lattice sheen;
My years were young, nor cold my heart,—
Would I were as I have been!

With solemn steps they pass'd along,
Gazing, saint-like, on the ground,
And o'er the face of every nun
Close the vestal crape was wound.

Fancy might figure charms ;
Nothing met my ardent glance,
Until I saw across the hall
The lingering last advance.

Her veil was parted o'er her brow,
Each charm reveal'd to sight ;
And meeting mine, her dark black eye
Beam'd with most radiant light.

Once to withdraw it she essay'd ;
Blushingly she gazed again ;
Her steps were slower, and she seem'd
As though to loiter fain.

But soon a voice of harshest tone
Cried " Bianca, why so slow ?"
She hurried then—she disappear'd :
I never saw her more.

But, oh the glance of those dark eyes,
And oh that face so pale,
And oh that moment in the church
Beyond the lengthened aisle,

Have never, never been forgot
In all life's wild career,
And still my sober'd heart can give
To them, a sigh—a tear !

Long years have pass'd—and I have been
In regions far from Spain ;
But whether on the mountain bold,
Or on the stormy main,

And whether in the crowded hall,
Or in the chamber still,
Or toiling o'er the sun-burnt plain,
Or regions drear and chill,

And whether in dear Italy,
With fair, kind friends around,
Or bending low at Beauty's shrine,
On Hellas' classic ground,

And whether cheer'd by Fortune's smile,
Or wither'd by her frown —
That church, that face, those coal-black eyes,
Long veil, and sable gown,

Have never ceased to haunt my soul,
And make me sigh in vain ;
And turn with blessings to the past,
And thee—young Nun of Spain.

“ A very pretty song indeed, and a pretty confession of what estranges you from your countrywomen, and makes you lead a hermit's life !” said a soft, playful voice.

Bernardino looked up and saw the face and form of La Dama Cibo, the wife of his neighbour Fiesco ; —but who was she who hung so modestly—so re-

tiringly on her arm? It was a young lady of the Fieschi family, who, having passed all her life in a monastery, had of her own free will determined to take the veil, and was now abroad for a week or two, to see that world of which she had hitherto known nothing—which she despised, and was about to abandon for ever. This brief glimpse of the ways of society is generally prescribed by the institutions of the monastic orders, which would not receive a renunciation of the world, whose value or extent is not somewhat known to the young person renouncing. In most cases, where the fate of the novice was determined upon by her family, this short egress from the convent was either not spent in the manner intended, or was a cruelty, by showing the young victim pleasures which could never be her's, and awakening notions which might never have penetrated the happy ignorance of the cell. But the family and friends of Emilie de' Fieschi were by no means anxious that she should be hurried through her short period of liberty, and sent back to the noviciate, and then to the veil;—on the contrary, all their anxiety was to procure for her some such charm as would overthrow her own resolution of becoming a nun, and bind her to society, where her birth and fortune assured her an enviable post.

It was in some such view as this, and at some other instigations of her husband, that the Countess had brought her niece into the gardens of their eccentric but amiable neighbour, where the imaginative Bernardino was now gazing like one entranced, or about to be so, on the youthful Emilie.

As he looked in her face, he was struck with a resemblance, real or imaginary, to the image that had so long haunted him—to the young Spanish nun. She wore the dress of the same order, the same black robe, the same long, sable veil, parted over her forehead, as *she* behind the altar of the Gothic church. Emilie's eyes were also as black as her's, and seemed for a moment fixed on his, with the same intensesness and expression.

These points were indeed striking in their similarity; and making the first impression, his warm fancy added to them, until he saw the very identity of his Platonic mistress in the young Genoese.

His ardent, imaginative mind was filled to overflowing by this image, and all that it recalled; and, spite of his sense of the duties of gallantry, he sat several minutes fixed to his seat in the bower, and his eyes on his blushing visitor, utterly unable to speak to her or her companion. The noble wife of Fiesco, evidently delighted at the effect the

charms of her niece produced on the eccentric recluse ; which, with a woman's quickness of penetration in these matters, was already met by a corresponding feeling in the breast of the young devotee ; and before she rallied Bernardino, she said to herself, " St. George to my aid ! and I shall not only save a pretty girl from a convent, but a handsome fellow from the life of a hermit."

She then spoke aloud to the platonician : " And have you no word of welcome to offer to ladies, who, undismayed by the reports of your philosophy and severity, have dared to intrude upon your solitude, and to listen to the prettiest song that was ever composed to a pair of black eyes ?"

" Noble lady !—excellent neighbour !" replied Bernardino, turning his looks with difficulty from Emilie to her aunt. " I am more than grateful for such a visit to such a dreaming, somewhat melancholy visionary as myself ; and it is only my surprise—its unexpectedness—my—in short, that hath prevented me from welcoming you as you merit."

" No compliment, gentle sir ; it is enough that you expel us not ; but the Count, my husband, would have speech with you ; and I have preceded him by a few minutes, to show to my niece Emilie

the beauties of your villa, of which she has heard, even in her Convent of Saint Clare's."

The name of the monastery being the same as that in which he had seen the young Spaniard, thrilled him to the heart: his infatuation was increased, but its object scarcely changed, for he felt as if he still worshipped her whose image he had seen but for a moment, but which, exalted by his singular platonic system, and purified by poetry and ideality, had never quitted him. He felt as if he worshipped all this again in the young Genoese;—as if that meeting of which he had despaired on earth was vouchsafed to the purity and constancy of his passion. But would it not be transitory like its predecessor? was Emilie not to be like Bianca, the inmate of a convent—the vestal spouse of Heaven? or why that dress?

These thoughts went rapidly through his mind, and occupied him, even as he made a courteous reply to the dame; and issuing from the bower, prepared to escort her and her blushing relative over the grounds.

As Bernardino walked a little in advance of the ladies, turning frequently to explain some object of art, or to point out some beautiful view, and as his handsome countenance glowed with excitement,

the young Emilie felt for the first time in her life that there might be happiness in another mode of life than that of a nun.

When they had finished their survey of the grounds, the animated host, whom a few minutes had made a different man, led them towards the house.

A pretty piece of coquetry on the part of the dame as to whether she with her niece could or could not entrust herself to the lares of a bachelor, was most opportunely interrupted by the arrival of Count Fiesco himself. After a few words of salutation, the Count, with eyes, in which there was more enquiry than in his words, fixed on the gentle devotee, said to her, "Well, Emilie, what think you of my noble neighbour's taste?—is the villa Bernardino Spinola as fine a place as it has been described to you?"

"It is beautiful, my uncle—most beautiful!" replied Emilie.

"It will be thine own, an' thou wilt," thought the Countess.

"Was there ever a voice so beautiful as that!" thought Bernardino, who now heard her speak for the first time.

"It worketh well," mused the Count, eyeing

the party; "the moody philosopher will be won by beauty and love to embrace my cause."

The accomplished host now ushered them into his mansion, where the parties stayed some time examining the pictures and statues, and other works of art it contained. The Countess would have retired with her fair niece when this was done, and left her lord the opportunity he desired of conversing with the no longer melancholy recluse, but the Count himself opposed this.

"Not so, Eleonora," said he: "the business I came on may wait till to-morrow, since our kind neighbour is so cheerful this evening—let us converse here awhile as we are, and perhaps he will honour our conversazione and our supper!"

"Willingly—most willingly," replied Bernardino, with an alacrity he had long been a stranger to—
• for he had looked into the eyes of the young devotee, that said, as plainly as eyes could say, "Come!"

And accordingly the little party sat in the most elegant, cool sala of the villa, until it was time for the noble Fieschi to receive their evening visitors; and then Bernardino showing to Emilie an assiduity and closeness of attention not usual in Italy to an unmarried lady, (and to a devotee,) accompanied his guests to the Villa Fieschi, and there he stayed

till a late hour, and then he returned with the intelligence, most readily, and as it were carelessly given by the Lady Eleonora, that her young and beautiful niece was not destined by her family to a convent; on the contrary, that her family would be overjoyed to detain her in the world, and would give all proper encouragement to a suitor who should undertake the task of changing her resolves.

"If it should be my fate," mused Bernardino, "to attach to myself, while it is yet time, so lovely and gentle a being — if the Nun of Spain was only offered for a moment to my eyes, to keep my heart pure until this young novice of Genoa should claim my adoration — if the one was but a type of the other — or if they were both but images of the same soul, — and if it should be my fate here, as it is sometimes given to peculiarly favoured mortality, to meet and mingle with my soul's half, I may taste on earth the happiness of Heaven!"

And with such reasoning as this, and still attaching himself to his curious system, he at last fell asleep to dream of Emilie.

There was more than one object proposed in the visits that had thus broken on the solitude of Bernardino Spinola. The Countess, who was herself still a young and very handsome woman, had been

anxious only to introduce her young kinswoman to the attention of one so noble, wealthy, accomplished and benevolent ; but her husband, who was as anxious as herself that Emilie should not be buried in a convent, hoped moreover, by her fascinations, to gain over the philosopher to certain revolutionary views of his own, about which he had already sounded him, and found him cold or inimical. His wife was as yet ignorant of his ambitious projects, and had been overjoyed at his ready concurrence with her views ; and she thought it was only to forward them, that he repeated his visit to the Villa Spinola on the following day.

In this interview, after some remarks on the Genoese nobles, they had met the preceding evening, and some conversation about the fair Emilie, which Bernardino would fain have prolonged, the Count entered cautiously on his old subject. He stated, and in stronger terms than he had hitherto employed, that the liberty of the Genoese Republic was now nothing more than a name ; that the Dorias, with a small number of the noble families, to the utter exclusion of all the rest, governed Genoa with absolute sway ; and that the Emperor Charles V., who had been declared Protector of the city, in reality acted as master, paying the Dorias to do

his will. But the spirit of Independence was reviving in Genoa; thousands cried for the restitution of a popular form of government; and he could add, of his own private knowledge, that many of the patrician families were ready to head the enterprise and to strike a blow — he did not venture as yet to say the blow was to be a double murder!

In reply, the too delicate and deliberating Bernardino admitted the extinction of many popular rights, and the unjust exclusion of most of the patricians from all share in the government of the state; but he reminded the ardent Fiesco of the dreadful anarchy that had preceded the administration of the really great Andrea Doria, who had been hailed as the restorer of Genoese liberty, when, twenty years before, he had expelled the troops of the French king, who then exercised the dangerous office of Protector of the Republic, with much less regard to its right than the Emperor; he dwelt, with no enthusiasm indeed, on the comparative tranquillity and prosperity Genoa had enjoyed for twenty years under Doria, and was now enjoying under the shadow of the Imperial Eagle, and from an intimate acquaintance with the distracted, enfeebled state of Italy, he insisted that nothing could be done with that almost certainty

of success, lacking which, all attempts at revolution were crimes to our fellow-citizens, against the authority and will of Charles V. at this moment. . .

“ But my noble countryman! we have the support of the French King — of Charles’ rival; the generous and gallant Francis I.” said Fiesco, interrupting him.

“ If we are to return to the old story — to a choice of arbiters or masters,” replied Bernardino, with some warmth, “ I cannot move even a finger in the cause. I have yet to learn that the supremacy of the French is more honourable and less oppressive to Genoa — to Italy, than that of the Germans and Spaniards; and I know that to procure it here blood must be spilt, and certain injuries inflicted on the well-being of my fellow-citizens. No! unless I see—which I cannot do—the means of working out a revolution in Italy by wholly Italian instruments, and in which, nor Francis nor Charles shall have any part, I must remain as I have been, a melancholy — .

“ As to Italian instruments,” said Fiesco impatiently, “ I may tell you in secret, that we are sure of the connivance or assistance of the Pope Paul, who hates Andrea Doria our tyrant.”

“ The policy of the Court of Rome is so dark and

complicated, and so little in accordance with my notions of liberty and Italian independence, that I should shrink from so dangerous an ally," said Bernardino.

"But — again I claim your secrecy, my noble friend — there are other princes in Italy who will aid us in our endeavours to recover the liberty of Genoa!"

"There is not one of them has left a shadow of liberty in his own states," said Bernardino.

Fiesco blushed at this truth, but continued: "Still it may suit their interests and feelings to assist in our liberation; and when we have disposed of the Dorias, we may be left to form our own government."

"All this is too hypothetical," replied Bernardino, after a long pause; "and I cannot recall the feuds and factions that so long desolated and disgraced Genoa when she *was* left to herself, and her turbulent republicans, without dreading their recurrence. When you have effected a revolution at the cost of blood by the hands of the populace, do you think that you can easily reduce them to order, and restore them to that respect for the patrician body which you consider at once essential to your own honour and the well-being of the republic?"

"'Tis useless to prolong this conversation: he is not yet ripe for my purpose," thought Fiesco, who then exacting another promise of inviolable secrecy from Bernardino, took his leave, again musing as he went homeward. "But he must be ours—his name, his family connexions, his great wealth, his reputation for wisdom and worth among the mob, who most reverence those who most shun them, render his adhesion to our plots of the greatest importance. Yes! he must be with us, and my fair niece must so strengthen the spell she has cast over him, as to make him do what I wish, to obtain her as his bride!"

The present feelings and disposition of the so lately all-devout Emilie favoured her uncle's projects, for not only had she sent word to her dear Lady Abbess that she felt she was not worthy of the beatitude of the monastic life, which she therefore renounced for a more worldly one, but she confessed in secret to her aunt, that it was Bernardino had changed her notions on the subject; and that, if she was not already in love with him, she *thought* she soon should be.

Invited in the most pressing manner by uncle and by aunt, received with endearing, intoxicating smiles by the niece, it was no wonder that Bernardino.

philosopher as he was, should be spell-bound, and constantly at the villa of the Count Lavagna de' Fieschi, or that he should accommodate his growing passion to his philosophy and whimsical theory. His long-cherished passion for the ideal had not destroyed his relish for the real, and he soon loved the fair Emilie as she deserved to be loved. Once convinced of this fact, he threw off his platonics, and asked her hand from her uncle, who was her guardian.

This was the moment on which the Count had calculated. He expressed his sense of the honour intended his niece and family; he had nothing to object to his proposals and arrangements; Bernardino was, of all the Patricians of Genoa, the man he would have chosen for his lovely relative; but he could not—he would not consent to the union unless Bernardino took part in a conspiracy which he had now almost matured, for the overthrow of the Dorias, and a total change in the government of Genoa.

Deep in love as he was, the recluse would not abandon his principles; and after having repeated and lengthened his former arguments on the subject of Italian revolution, and endeavoured in vain to prove to the Count the iniquity of the

measures he proposed, and the great uncertainty of what might be their issue, he declined, in language as firm as that used by Fiesco regarding his marriage with Emilie—that he could not and would not take part in the conspiracy. Angry words on the part of the Count, and a fellow conspirator who was with him, succeeded; nothing but the admirable equanimity of Bernardino could have prevented these words from degenerating into a personal encounter; but he coolly ended the interview by giving the promise required of him, that he would not betray his neighbour to the Dorias, although the Count swore at the same time he should never again approach his niece.

As the conspirators left the beautiful, tranquil villa with stormy minds, Verrina, the Count's companion, one of the leaders in the dark plot, "a man of desperate fortune, capable alike of advising and executing the most audacious deeds,"* earnestly proposed to take off Bernardino by secret assassination, lest he should make any disclosure; but Fiesco was prevented by his own more honourable feelings, and his full confidence in the honour of his friend, from listening to his horrible suggestions.

* Robertson, Charles V. Book viii.

The lover was spared the blow of the dagger, but he soon found his separation from Emilie almost as cruel as that could have been. Every attempt to see her, or to correspond with her, failed; and his beautiful retreat became odious to him soon after, when the Count removed with his family from Campo Marone to the city of Genoa. He possessed a splendid mansion in the city, but he had given up the possession of it to a noble relative, with whom he was now fain to reside as a visiter, in order to be nearer to the object of his love, and to see what should pass.

From the time Fiesco had made his final proposal to him, he had heard no more of his plot; and seeing the Count even gayer than had been his wont, and entirely abandoned to pleasure and dissipation, and that month passed away after month, with no sinister event, he began to indulge in the hope that the conspiracy had been abandoned, and that a return to more moderate views would induce the Fieschi to renew their friendship with him.

But Gian Luigi Fiesco, Count of Lavagna, possessed the qualities of a conspirator in a degree that renders his character conspicuous even among the very remarkable conspirators of Italy. His gaiety and dissipation were mere masks to the

intense and deadly purposes from which he never swerved for a moment. Even from the banqueting-hall he was corresponding with or receiving messages from the French Ambassador at Rome : the whispers in the corner of the ball-room, accompanied by hearty laughs, were not about the party present, and the pretty gay Genoese dames, but related to his confederacy with Farnese Duke of Parma,* the Pope's natural son ; and it was not to ply the wine-cup that he would often detain his numerous guests within his "black and white"† palace until the rising sun gilded the long line of fortresses that fringed the mountain of the Sprone behind Genoa. The four galleys he purchased from the Pope, and manned chiefly with his own vassals, were never designed, as he stated they were, to cruise against the Turks ; and it was with other sentiments than generosity or thoughtless profuseness, that he lavished his great fortune on the populace and the needy adventurers that thronged Genoa.

* This Prince was disgusted with the Emperor (to whom the Dorias were subservient) for refusing to grant him the investiture of the Duchy of Parma.

† The black and white fronts of the Genoese palaces were formerly the distinctive of the highest nobility. Their material was marble.

As Andrew Doria was now at a very advanced age, Fiesco and his party might perhaps have taken patience until a natural death should relieve them of him; but the old Doge had a favourite relative, who was not only to inherit his immense private fortune, but was known to aim at being likewise the successor of his grand-uncle in power. This Giannettino Doria was haughty, insolent, and overbearing; his vices and follies did more than anything else in strengthening the party of the Fieschi; and it was now determined by the conspirators that he should be murdered with his grand-uncle.

Whatever may have been the feelings with which the Count first embraced the project of revolution, it is certain that his heart was vitiated and hardened in its prosecution. By the advice of Verrina, he abandoned his plan of re-establishing the republic on its former footing, and placing it again under the protection of the French monarch; but on the contrary, he resolved to usurp himself the power of Andrew Doria, and be himself the despot of Genoa. With the same insidious counsellor at his ear, Fiesco formed the most treacherous, infamous, sacrilegious projects for disposing of the venerable Doria and his friends.

At first he proposed to murder them as the foul

conspirators the Pazzi had murdered Giuliano de' Medici at Florence, during the celebration of high mass in the cathedral church of Genoa; but this plan was abandoned, as Andrew Doria was frequently obliged, by the infirmities of old age, to absent himself from public religious ceremonies. He next concerted that he would invite both grand-uncle and nephew, with their principal adherents, to a friendly entertainment in his own house, and there butcher them; and it was only owing to the caprice of Giannettino Doria, who left the town on the day of the invitation and put off the party, that the crime was not perpetrated in this execrable manner. At last Fiesco determined to do by open force what he could not do without delays, on which there was no calculating, by stratagem; and with Verrina, who next to himself was the great disposer of the revolution, he fixed on the night between the second and third* of January for its execution.

On the morning of that fatal day, as Bernardino Spinola was passing the splendid mansion of the Fieschi, thinking only of Emilie, he was surprised

* Muratori differs by a day in the date. "Scelesse la notte precedente ai dì 2 di Gennajo di quest'anno, per effettuare il suo perverso disegno."—Annali, ann. 1547.

to see the Count issue from its gate, and come up and address him in a smiling, friendly manner. They had not spoken since their quarrel at the villa: the voice of an old friend resuming again its tones of good-will and affection, almost brought a flush of tears to the eyes of the sensitive Bernardino, who continued, in spite of his abhorrence of the plot that had been proposed to him, but which he now fancied must have been abandoned, to admire Fiesco, as all Genoa admired him, for no man could possess in a more eminent degree the qualities that captivate the heart and affections of men.*

"Peace be unto you, Signior Count!" said Bernardino, when his feelings allowed him to speak; "peace be between you and me! It is not my fault if—"

"Let us forget the past!" said Fiesco hastily,—"let us again break bread together! I have a few friends assembled here, and am going to bid more to my festive table,—prithce enter and join them!"

Overjoyed at this reconciliation, and receiving the Count's promise that he would soon return, Bernardino walked up to the gates of the Fiesco palace which were left hospitably open, as if to invite every comer. He entered a spacious court surrounded by lofty walls; but his pleasure gave

* Robertson.

place to surprise and alarm, when he saw this court crowded with armed men of all classes, and that strong guards with drawn swords, posted under the walls near the gates, suffered no person who had entered to return. Seizing his opportunity when he thought no one observed him, he was creeping through this silent but desperate-looking mob towards one of the gates, and had put his hand on his sword with the intention of fighting his way out, when two conspirators placed their arquebuses to his breast, and without speaking pointed across the court to the house. There was no misunderstanding such an intimation : resistance or remonstrance would have been absurd ; so Bernardino walked on and entered the mansion with as much coolness as he could command. The antechambers were filled with implements of war, and the inner apartments he found crowded with conspirators, who were engaged in busy conference, and by Genoese nobles and citizens, decoyed like himself, who gazed at each other with astonishment and terror. Of both these classes, Bernardino was intimately acquainted with many individuals ; but he left to themselves those who were evidently taking part in the conspiracy or approved of it, to join his complaints with the citizens who were protesting against the

violent restraint put upon their persons, and wondering how and when all this would terminate. Hour passed after hour, and the Count returned not; but in his stead Bernardino saw Verrina arrive in the palace with a number of desperate-looking men, portions of the selected crews of the galleys and of the vassals of the Fieschi. Against Verrina he had always felt an antipathy: he *thought* it was he who had led his friend; he *knew* that his character was dark and treacherous, and every way demoralized:—he trembled at the idea of the nature and termination of a revolution effected by so much vice. Verrina, however, soon relieved him from his odious presence, going away with several others of the Count's most devoted partisans, to perambulate the city, and to invite, in the name of their patron, to supper in his palace, many other principal citizens, whose disgust with the administration of the Dorias was known or suspected. Of the multitude that now crowded the court-yard and halls of the Fiesco palace, and who kept every minute increasing, only a few knew the purpose—the whole of the purpose, for which they were assembled. It was curious to observe these men looking around them with astonished eyes, wondering what was to ensue, each of them evidently imagining the other to

be in the secret,—all of them diffident and suspicious. Bernardino, who knew more, was obliged to be silent; for, whenever he approached any citizen of distinction not in the secret, he observed two ferocious-looking satellites of Verrina armed with arquebuses, watching him with malignant eyes, and plainly listening to what he said. As the long hours however went on, his impatience became so irritated, that as he paced up and down the marble hall through the crowd, he could not help murmuring to some of his acquaintances at their unjustifiable detention; and when a nobleman, one of the bidden guests, who was known at Genoa for his devotion to the good things of the table, said aloud, “By St. George! and this is a curious feast our munificent friend Fiesco hath so pressingly invited us to! doth he mean to feed us on guns and swords, with daggers and pistols for entremets?” Bernardino was going to assume a higher tone, and to try the effect of his eloquence in exciting his friends to some more energetic process, when one of Verrina’s bravoes whispered in his ear, “Silence or death!”

Meanwhile, the shades of night were fast closing on the singular scene, and concealing the agitated countenances of the conspirators and their alarmed guests. But now Bernardino heard the well known

voice of the Count crying out, "Lights ! ho there ! lights in every hall !" and the next minute saw him enter the apartment preceded by a page carrying a torch, and with a gay countenance and perfectly unembarrassed demeanour. The conspirators surrounded Fiesco, and he spoke with them apart.

This extraordinary man had been employed since morning in visiting his friends, passing some hours with them in his usual gay, free style ; and he had just returned from paying his court at the palace of the Dorias, where (while we abhor his treachery, we must admire his perfect self-possession !) he comported himself with his accustomed respectful, yet frank and friendly manner, and where, watching the countenance and behaviour both of old Andrew Doria and his grand-nephew Giannettino, he saw that they had not the least foresight or dread of that storm which had been so long gathering, and was now ready to burst over their heads.* Fiesco was not long absorbed in the circle of the conspirators : he leaped on a marble table that stood at the end of the crowded hall, which was now illuminated by numerous lamps and torches, and addressed the Genoese with all his eloquence and energy, and a look full of alacrity and confidence.

* Robertson. Foglietto.

He told them it was not for a sordid feast, but for a deed of valour, he had assembled them there. That it was to strike a blow for liberty and immortal renown,—to overthrow the exorbitant, intolerable power of the Dorias,—to relieve Genoa from them and the partiality and interference of the Emperor, that he had bidden them to the palace of the Fieschi. He exposed the blind security of the tyrants, and his own providence and all-sufficient means. Nothing could be easier than the blow contemplated ! The generous effort that was to deliver their country from tyranny was certain of success, without being accompanied with danger.

At the termination of this spirited address, Fiesco's vassals and hirelings shouted with enthusiasm. The adventurers and desperadoes who had been collected there in great numbers were overjoyed at the prospect of the confusion and licence an insurrection would afford them. The more noble and the more virtuous saw themselves completely in the power of the mob, and durst not discover their inward sentiments. In short, the whole assembly applauded, or feigned to applaud, the undertaking and the spirit of the Count.

Fiesco was crossing the hall elated by this ap-

plause, when Bernardino approached him, and demanded his liberty, as he, for one, would not accede to what was proposed.

"Are you mad?" replied the Count in a whisper, "to provoke men whose passions I may not be able to control."

"Let that consideration stay you even now!" said Bernardino in the same low tone, and laying his hand on his friend's arm; "think, noble Count, what will be the fate of Genoa when *these* and their *uncontrollable* passions are let loose upon her!"

"What! still so lady-hearted!" replied Fiesco; "then go and sacrifice your share in our glory,—but promise first to remain quiet until—"

"I can make no such promise, with the feeling I have to go at once to the gallant old Doria, who, be the defects of his government what they may, deserves not to be murdered in his bed!" said Bernardino, interrupting him.

"Then, without that promise you must tarry here for an hour or two!" exclaimed Fiesco, reddening. "Ho, there! Scannabecchi! take charge of this foolish recreant! hurt not a hair of his head, but see that he escapes not from this palace till I am master of Andrew Doria's," and leaving Bernar-

dino in the hands of one of the desperate villains who had been watching him, the Count quitted the hall.

He was going on a mission of love and gentleness : his ambition and dark conspirings had not diminished his sense of his noble lady's beauties and virtues ; he still loved his wife with tender affection, and he could not depart on his daring enterprise without taking a kind farewell. He found her with her lovely niece, the lady Emilie, trembling and in tears. They had long seen the palace crowded with armed men ; she had naturally concluded some hazardous deed was contemplated, and she was full of anguish and uncertainty as to what might be her husband's fate. When he entered the room, she rushed to his embrace ; and as soon as tears and sobs would permit her to speak, she implored he would tell his faithful, loving wife what perilous deed he had in hand. Fiesco, who had never before breathed a word to her of the matter, now told her all he had undertaken. This confirmed the worst of the doubtings that for many hours had agonized her affectionate, virtuous heart ; her foreboding mind might have felt the fatal issue of the dark conspiracy, and she wept and prayed

with the energy of despair, that he would yet renounce his purpose.

With great difficulty Fiesco, who, resolute as he was, could not help being somewhat unmanned by this tender scene, disengaged himself from his wife's entwining arms and passionate embrace. He said all he could to soothe her and to inspire her with his own sanguine hopes. Determined at length to rush from difficulties into which "an excess of tenderness had betrayed him," he gently took her by the hand, and led her to a window of the apartment which commanded a view of the greater part of the magnificent city, and the port, and the fortified mountain of the Sprone, against which proud Genoa leans. He stretched out his hand towards the town, where the marble black and white mansions of the Genoese aristocracy,—the palaces of the great Durazzi, the Balbi, the Serra, the Negroni, and the *Dorias*,—were shining in the moonlight, with the pleasant suburb of Albaro beyond them and the city walls, on gentle hills covered with elegant villas,—he turned that hand towards the magnificent port, where proud galleys and rich argosies too numerous to count, lay crowded at anchor, with the far stretching sea ruffled by a gentle breeze, and now and then streaked by a

passing vessel, or shadowed by a drifting cloud, flowing freely beyond them; and when his virtuous wife had seen all these and the glory thereof, Fiesco exclaimed:

“To-morrow, my dearest Eleonora, you shall behold yourself mistress of all this,—of all Genoa, or never see me more.”

She shrieked and turned again to embrace him, but he threw off her fond hand and ran out of the room, in which his lady now fainted in the arms of the weeping and terrified Emilie.

In a very few minutes the Count re-appeared among the conspirators, clad in complete and massy armour. The final plans and modes of operation were now arranged, and these desperate men waited impatiently for the moment of action. It arrived at last; and as the clocks of the city sounded the hour of midnight, they rushed with determined hearts from the Palace of the Fieschi into the streets of the city.

As Bernardino saw them take their departure, band after band, and each looking more ferocious than the preceding one, he shuddered at the horrors that might be committed, and longed for the moment when he should know the worst.

The first operation of the Count was to make

himself master of the gate of the city called Dell' Arco, and this he did without meeting with any resistance. His two brothers, Girolamo and Ottobuono, he despatched to assault and seize the gate of San Tommaso, while he now reserved for himself the post of importance and of greatest danger, and attacked the twenty galleys of Andrew Doria, that lay in the Darsena, or little harbour, whose mouth was already blocked up by the bold Verrina, with Fiesco's galley, which was pretended to have been fitted out against the Turks. But the latter precaution seems to have been scarcely required; for Doria's anchored galleys were no more in a condition to escape than to resist; they were at the moment unrigged and disarmed, and had no crew on board, except the slaves chained to the oar. The Count at once obtained possession of them, though not without a tremendous tumult made by the galley-slaves, who at first knew not what fate the attack foreboded for them, and then shouted and applauded at the welcome intelligence of a revolution.

At the same time the other conspirators, after a smart conflict with the guards, gained the gate of San Tommaso, whence they intended to pass at once to the Doria Palace, situated beyond the city walls, and to murder Andrew and Giannettino. But Gian-

nettino in the mean while had been awaked by the terrible noise from the Darsena, and believing only that some quarrel, or a rising, had taken place among the galley-slaves, he hastily dressed himself, and preceded by a single page, who carried a torch, he ran to the gate of San Tommaso, and imperiously demanding to enter, for his evil fortune he entered;—the next moment the furious conspirators, with many wounds, extended him dead in the shadow of that gate. Had they obeyed their instructions, and then rushed on to the palace, Andrew Doria, who was in bed oppressed with the weight of fourscore years, and tormented by the gout,* must have shared his grand-nephew's fate; but the Count's brother, Girolamo de' Fieschi, from the sordid consideration of preventing the popular plunder of that rich palace during the confusion, forbade his followers to advance. It was this saved the old warrior and statesman, for it gave some of his friends time to warn him of all that had happened — of the assassination of his grand-nephew — of the fate he had to expect himself; and dragging his infirm body, now doubly overburthened by the affliction of his soul, to his palace

* “ Stava egli in letto, stanco sotto il peso di ottanta anni, e maltrattato dalle gotte.”—Muratori, *Annali*.

gate, he mounted a mule with difficulty, and rode off in the direction of La Masone, a castle belonging to the Spinoli; while the whole city behind him seemed exclaiming with one voice, "Liberty and the Fieschi!"

But where was he whose name was thus coupled with the glorious name of Liberty—a word so often abused, and notoriously so in the present instance, when it was principally shouted by the mob, who were anxious only for the pillage of the nobles' palaces?—where was the bold, the confident Count, who had roused into action these perilous elements? At the moment when his success seemed complete, or nothing remaining for him to do but to seize the Palazzo Publico, whence he might hurl his sentences of death or banishment on the partisans of the murdered Dorias, (for he doubted not that by this time his brother Girolamo had disposed of both,) at this moment, when all-triumphant, and elated with every prospect that could flatter his ambition, as he was passing on a plank from one galley to another, the plank overturned, and, heavily armed as he was, he sank into the sea to rise no more!

So great was the noise and confusion, that this awful accident was not known for some time.

Verrina was the first who discovered it, and dreading its consequences, he kept it as secret as he could, hoping thus to gain time to conclude a treaty with the senators that should put Genoa in the power of the conspirators. But the dread news of the death of the man whom they adored, and whom alone they trusted, soon spread among the conspirators and the people, and carried discouragement with it. His brother Girolamo, a giddy youth, acted in the most imprudent manner: the Senate, who had now assembled in the Palace of the Republic, assumed the courage the other party were losing, and by daybreak the conspirators, abandoned by the populace, were glad to take to flight, and abandon with precipitation a city which but a few hours before was ready to acknowledge them as masters.*

Towards the evening of the following day, old Andrew Doria returned to Genoa, where his name was shouted as loudly as that of Fiesco and Liberty had been so short a time before. The punishments he inflicted were moderate, although his humiliation and wrongs were fresh in his mind, and the disfigured corpse of his grand-nephew, the prop of his old age, was before his eyes. They

* Muratori, Annali. Robertson, Hist. Charles V.

fell principally upon the family of the Fieschi, whose property was all confiscated,—the splendid palace of the Count was rased to the ground, and his brother Girolamo being soon after taken, was executed with two others.*

Bernardino, whom we left in no enviable situation, was not liberated by the bravoës until the Senate had obtained the upper hand. In spite of his vices, he grieved for the death of his friend; and a few months after showed the durability and disinterestedness of his attachment, by marrying the Lady Emilie, who was now fortuneless.

* “ Il Conte Girolamo con li suoi si rinchiuse in una torre, e quindi si resono à discrezione de' vincitori, e furono mandati in Genova, e due di coloro che si erano trovati, ad uccidere Giannettino furono impiccati, ed al Conte Girolamo tagliarono la testa.”—Adriani, Storia de' suoi tempi, Libro 6.

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HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

Seventeenth Century.

A.D. 1607—1688.

No signal revolution occurred in Italy during the whole course of this century. Submission to despotism had been confirmed into a habit; the cruelties and crimes that had almost always accompanied the struggles of the Italians were succeeded by milder vices. Excluded from the absorbing occupation of politics by the despots, domestic or foreign, who ruled them; persuaded by the haughty, indolent Spaniards, that trade was an occupation unworthy of men of birth; the nobles, instead of attempting to invigorate the declining commerce, abandoned it altogether. Younger brothers were specially condemned to patrician indolence, poverty, and celibacy, and to the degrading resources of a life of *cecisbeism*.

The princes of the little states slumbered on their thrones, or contented themselves with an attention to the fine arts: those of Savoy, who wielded the sceptre of Piedmont, were the only exceptions. They extended their dominions and their influence, though perhaps not by means favourable to the Italians.

This ignoble state of things was not, however, unaccompanied by bickerings and jealousies, foreign quarrels and intrigues: these, indeed, are too disgustingly numerous to mention; but a few dates will serve to mark the really important events.

A quarrel between the Church of Rome and the Venetians, who had forbidden the augmentation of churches

A.D.
1607.

-
- A.D. and convents in their territories without their express
1607. permission, was terminated by negotiation; though it had
once threatened to kindle a general war, and the Pope
had excommunicated the Republicans.
1618. The famous conspiracy at Venice, which Otway has
rendered so familiar to the English reader, took place.
1625. Genoa was besieged by a French army of 30,000 men;
but with the assistance of the Spaniards, successfully de-
fended herself.
1626. The Duchy of Urbino was annexed to the Papal States,
and its industry and prosperity, for which it had long
been remarkable, were blighted.
1627. A disputed succession to the Duchy of Mantua involved
all Lombardy in troubles;—the Imperialists, the Spa-
niards, the French, and the troops of Savoy, played their
mischievous pranks on the ancient theatre of so many
sanguinary wars, but seldom penetrated beyond the
northern provinces of Italy.
1628. Giulio Cesare Vachero, a wealthy Genoese merchant,
but not of the privileged aristocracy, after having long car-
ried on the work of assassination through hired bravoës,
(who were now very common in Italy,) conspired unsuc-
cessfully to overthrow the oligarchical constitution. He
was backed by the House of Savoy, which might already
covet that possession of Genoa—only obtained in our days.
1631. The peace of Chierasco concluded the war of the
Mantuan succession.
1639. A civil war, aggravated by the interference of the
French and Spaniards, was carried on in Savoy and Pied-
mont.
1645. The Turks made an unexpected and unprovoked attack
on the Venetians by laying siege to Candia, which was
nobly defended for even a longer period than that of the
siege of old Troy.

—Witnessed the extraordinary insurrection of the Neapolitans under the fisherman Masaniello. A.D.
1647.

Louis XIV. quarrelled with the Pope, Alexander VII., about an affray that took place at Rome through the arrogance of his ambassador, the Duc de Crequi. 1660.

The Pope had the mortification of being obliged to submit to the terms of accommodation which Louis XIV. imperiously dictated ; the final and most humiliating of these conditions was, that the Pope should send a member of his own family to Paris to make his apologies. These conditions were not only subscribed to, but rigorously enforced. Hitherto the Papal legates had appeared at the courts of Europe only to give laws and impose contributions : Cardinal Ghigi was the first despatched to any monarch to demand pardon for the Holy See. 1664.

The whole of the island of Candia, except two or three ports, was finally surrendered to the Turks by the Venetians, after a war in which 120,000 Mussulmans and 30,000 Christians are said to have perished. 1669.

A war broke out between the Republic of Genoa and the Duchy of Savoy. It ended without any important results ; and during the remainder of the seventeenth century the Oligarchy had no enemy to contend with except Louis XIV., who, in 1684, quarrelling with them about the port of Savona, sent a powerful naval armament to Genoa, which was bombarded, and compelled to make submission. 1672.

Several attempts had been made in Sicily to shake off the Spanish yoke ; but this year the people of Messina, despairing of defending their rights without assistance, had recourse to Louis XIV., whom they tempted with the offer of the sovereignty of their city, and the eventual union of their whole island with the French dominions. Louis gladly closed with their proposals : he was pro- 1674.

A.D. 1674. claimed King of Sicily at Messina, and despatched a small squadron to take possession of the city in his name.

1678. Louis XIV. basely abandoned the people of Messina, giving them up to their former masters, the insulted and vindictive Spaniards, who punished them in a most merciless manner; and the obedience of Messina was ensured by a desolation from which it has never since risen to its ancient prosperity—though the making it a free port by the princes of the House of Bourbon has no doubt immensely bettered its condition from what it was at the end of the seventeenth century.

1684. Venice, which alone of the Italian States retained its energies, in concert with the empire, entered on another war against the Turks. The Lion of Saint Mark again triumphed most gloriously in the fight: the island of Santa Maura, one of the keys of the Adriatic Gulf, was reduced; Continental Greece was invaded, and in three years Francesco Morosini, who had so gallantly defended Candia, having taken Modon, Argos, Napoli di Romania, and Corinth, and planted the banner of the Republic upon the smoking ruins of Athens, finally consummated the bold design he had cherished, of wresting the whole of the Morea from the infidels.

1687. The arrogant Louis XIV. again quarrelled with the Government of Rome respecting the privileges of the French embassy. He sent the Marquis de Lavardin to the Holy City to represent him; and the Marquis, keeping eight hundred armed men in his pay, braved the sovereignty of the Pope in his own capital. The Popedom had, in reality, now become what Berni described it.

“ Un papato composto di rispetti,
 Di considerazioni e di discorsi,
 Di più, di poi, di ma, di sì, di forsi,
 Di pur, d' assai parole senza effetti.”

The literature and the arts of Italy were naturally influenced in the seventeenth century by the state of politics and the demoralization of the public feeling, as well as by other circumstances. No form of government can probably ever be discovered with the faculty of insuring the succession of genius, or renewing in one age the immortal minds that gave splendour to another ; but it is certain that an indolent vitiated government is inimical to all the higher productions of the human intellect.

A.B.
1687.

In the seventeenth century, with the exception of a sonnet or two by Filicaja and Zappi, some lyrical pieces by Chiabrera, and the satires of the painter Salvator Rosa, we find little of the boldness and originality of the Italian Muse. There was regularity, elegance, refinement ; but the soul was no longer shaken, the spirits were no longer animated, and verse tended to that condition, completed in after years, when it did little more than soothe the ear by a mellifluous flow of words, destitute of ideas. At the same time Giambattista Marini, whose real genius and occasional tenderness make us the more lament his aberrations, corrupted the taste of the times by a contagion of obscenity and conceit.

The Italians of the present day use the "concettosi seicentisti" as terms of reproach ; and decency should prohibit the reading of many of the passages of the Cavaliere Marini, which are free from the defects of affectation, antithesis, and riddling. Remote from the flowery paths of poetry, Fra Paolo Sarpi, Caterina Davila, and the Cardinal Bentivoglio, supported the dignity of Italian historical composition, though they did not equal the evidence, the sobriety, and acumen of Machiavelli, or the strength and political knowledge of Guicciardini. At the same time, it must be said, that the moral philosophers of the seventeenth century freed themselves from the yoke

A.D. 1687. of peripateticism and superstition, and took a free and bold flight towards truth.

Declining in her literature, Italy however, always foremost in some department of study, cultivated the natural sciences with brilliant success; and besides Torricelli, Gianalfonso Borelli, Il Padre Castelli, Domenico Guglielmini, the great astronomer Cassini, the seventeenth century could boast of the more valuable part of the labours of the "starry Galileo,"* who saw,

Sotto l'etereo padiglion rotarsi
Più mondi, e il sole irradiarli immoto,
Onde all' Anglo, che tanta ala vi stese,
Sgombrò primo le vie del firmamento.†

And Galileo besides, in a literary point of view, had the merit of writing Italian prose with energy, simplicity, and beauty. "Non credetti," says the modern Parini, "inequale alla sublimità delle sue dottrine e delle sue scoperte il materno linguaggio, e scrisse in esso con quella regolarità e naturalezza di stile che conviene ad un filosofo il quale ha delle grandi cose a dire, e però d' altro più non si cura fuorchè d'essere ben inteso."‡

Academies and clubs were profusely established throughout Italy for the cultivation of literature, which they formalized and injured; and the fine arts were similarly effected by institutions of the same sort.

* Galileo was born at Pisa on the 15th February 1564. He lost his sight, of which he had made such glorious use, towards the end of 1637, and died on the 8th January 1641.

† Ugo Foscolo, *I Sepulcri*.

‡ Parini, *Princ. Lett.* cap. v.

Men met to copy their predecessors, and to praise and to copy each other—they lost sight of the great model—Nature; they lost the spring and independence of their own minds; they formed themselves into schools, as subservient and slavish as certain schools that had checked the growth of Philosophy; and Italian art so glorious in the Sixteenth, began to decline in the Seventeenth Century, towards that state of handicraft and inanity, from which only the exquisite Canova, in our days, has raised it.

A.D.
1687.

That truly wonderful man, Salvator Rosa, whom we have cited as among the exceptions in poetry, was certainly a striking exception in painting; but whatever be the wild and original merit of his pencil—whatever hold his savage scenery, and his banditti, and his steel-cased warriors, take of our imagination, confronted with the sublimity of Michael Angelo, the classical grace and dignity of Raphael, and the higher masters of the preceding age, his works are as an admirable romance, compared with an epic—the Iliad, the Æneid, the Gerusalemme, or the Paradise Lost.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles.

2.

The Fisherman's Rebellion.

O ! Pescator dell' onda !

VENETIAN BARCAROLE.

The Fisherman's Rebellion.

UNDER the government of the Spanish Viceroy, the Duke d'Arcos, the Neapolitan people were condemned to feel, in all its force, the oppressive influence of foreign dominion: their wealth was drained away by frequent impositions, which, notwithstanding the privileges granted by the Emperor Charles V. to his "Fedelissimo Popolo Napolitano," had continually increased from his time; and the numerous levies, when aggregated, made indeed a frightful mass. The government also extorted large sums every year from this impoverished nation, to send to their master the Spanish monarch, under the

The whole of the following notices have been taken from a very scarce and curious work, written by a priest who was an eye-witness to the principal facts, and published in the year after their occurrence. I met with the book by chance in an obscure bookseller's shop at Naples; and, struck by its manner, no less than by its matter, I purchased it. M.

specious title of presents. These were much like the gifts which our Henry VIII. obtained from his terrified Parliament. As the wants of the Spanish nation increased, the Neapolitans became utterly impoverished;* but the sapient viceroys made no account of the wretchedness of the people, and determined to struggle with them to the division of the last ducat. Nearly every necessary of life was already grievously taxed; the price of bread was trebled, and there was scarcely any money in circulation. In 1646, the government, wishing to make a fresh donation, imposed a new gabella, or duty, on all fruits and vegetables: this was, as it were, taking away the very staff of life from the lower classes of that crowded city. Numbers of them consequently perished for want, or languished in the midst of plenty; for nature was still as kind and productive as ever. The patience and forbearance of the people were at length exhausted; and they were ready to make any effort to relieve themselves from such intolerable suffering. "*Ad extremum sunt Populi exitium, cum extrema onera eis imponuntur,*" as my chronicler observes from Tac-

* In nineteen years, namely, from 1628 to 1647, these donativi to Philip III. and Philip IV. amounted to 100,000,000 ducats.

tus. As yet, however, no one offered himself as leader ; and their only efforts were prayers, supplications, and tears, poured out to the Viceroy whenever he appeared abroad, but which he heard, saw, and forgot. From prayers they proceeded to menaces ; and one Saturday, as he was proceeding to celebrate a religious festival at the church of La Madonna del Carmine, they so beset and terrified his Excellency that, from pure fear, he gave them his promise to take away entirely the detested *gabella*. There was no appearance that this promise would be performed ; the rage and indignation of the people increased, and, just at this period, they heard of a public tumult and struggle in Sicily, by means of which the Sicilians had entirely shaken off the burdensome imposition : this inspired them with envy and courage to do the like ; and Naples became a scene of discord and fury. The Viceroy began to feel the most serious alarm, and would perhaps have willingly abolished the tax ; but some of the wealthy inhabitants of Naples had at various times advanced money to the government, and by that means had become the proprietors of the impost. The interests of these persons were manifestly opposed to the interests of the people ; and the Viceroy could only propose to dispense with

the gabella on fruits and vegetables, by laying another duty equivalent to it on corn and oil. These articles already laboured under an insupportable burden, and such a proposition, therefore, matured and added vigour to the disaffection of the people. They now only wanted a leader: this leader was soon found—but let me introduce him in my author's own words:—

“In the *Quartiere del Mercato* * of Naples, there dwelt a young man; he was twenty-four years old, and married; full of wit and drollery; of a middling stature, and rather thin than fat; his eyes were black; he had two little brown mustachios; he wore neither shoes nor stockings; his dress was composed of short linen trowsers, a thick shirt, and a sailor's red cap on his head; but his aspect was beautiful and animated, and as vivacious as possible, and this has been shown by the effects. His business was to catch little fish with a rod and line; and to buy fish and carry them to sell in some parts of his quarter of the town, which business is, in Naples, called *Pescivendali*. His name was *Tomaso Anello d'Amalfi*; in the Neapolitan idiom called *Mas' Aniello*.”

* The residence of the lowest orders of the Neapolitan populace, somewhat like our Wapping or St. Giles's.

This was just the man to lead the fishermen and lazzaroni of Naples ; a philosophic patriot would never have gained their hearts ; and, besides, there were certain circumstances and superstitions connected with this person which assured them of success. Beneath the window of a house in which he dwelt was an old fountain, ornamented with the name and arms of the imperial benefactor of Naples, Charles V.—and Mas' Aniello (perhaps he knew not why) had been accustomed to say, in his joking humours, that he was destined to restore and renew in his city the favours and privileges granted to it by the benignity of that august monarch. A coincidence of names, however, had more effect on the mind of the populace. A hundred years precisely had now elapsed since a rising took place in Naples, to resist the introduction of the tribunal of the Holy Inquisition, which the bigoted Philip II. wished to establish in the year 1547 ; and this tumult was headed by a person of the name of Mas' Aniello, a native of the Sorrentine coast.

At the time when the Viceroy proposed to substitute a duty on corn and oil, in lieu of the gabella on fruits and vegetables, Mas' Aniello's fish were taken from him in the market-place ; the alleged

reason being that he had not paid the duty. Full of rage, he hurried away, at the moment of this insult, to a church in the neighbourhood of his residence, where Perrone, a celebrated captain of banditti, had, with one of his companions, taken refuge. When these men, observing the disturbed appearance of our fisherman, asked him, what ailed him? Mas' Aniello answered furiously, "that he would either be hung, or set the city to rights." At this they laughed, but Mas' Aniello was not a man to be trifled with: "Do not laugh," said he; "had I two or three of my humour, by heaven I would show what I could do!"—"What, what would you do?" cried they. "Will you be with me?" said Mas' Aniello.—"And why not?" answered they. "Pledge me then your faith, and you shall soon see what you have to do." They pledged their faith, and Mas' Aniello departed.

Leaving the church, he went round to all the fruit-sellers in the neighbourhood, and earnestly begged them to meet in the market-place, and to declare with united voices, that they would no longer continue their trade in fruit while the gabella continued. On the following day they nearly all assembled, but the representative of the city being informed of their intentions, and fearing a tumult,

went in person to the market, and made a verbal concession, which induced the mob to retire. Mas' Aniello, though disappointed this time, was not disheartened; he continued to go round the city, exclaiming, "Down with the gabella!" Numbers naturally collected around him; and from these he selected a great many children, whom he thus instructed; "Say as I say. Let oil be sold at a bajoco the measure; meat at six grains the rotolo; cheese at twenty-two grains the rotolo; wine at two grains the bottle," &c.* When they had well learnt this lesson, he sent them to cry it all over Naples, and even in the face of the Viceroy.

My author here makes the following observation: "At present, we pay exactly those prices which Mas' Aniello taught the children to demand."

Many people ridiculed Mas' Aniello, and sought to make him abandon his scheme; but he replied to them, "Let me alone; let me go on, and you will see the event;" and, in fact, in a short time, he had enlisted in his puerile troops above two thousand youths, and had armed them with sticks. On the 7th of July, it is usual to celebrate a fes-

* A bajoco is about a farthing English. A grain is rather less than a halfpenny. A rotolo is about thirty ounces.

tival* in the Chapel of St. Maria della Grazia, situated in the market. This festival is commonly attended by an immense number of young persons; who were accustomed, when the religious part of the ceremony was over, to amuse themselves by attacking with sticks, and fruit converted into missiles, a little wooden castle, which was built for the purpose. The moment arrived, but in the place where their ammunition was usually lying in heaps on the ground, there was now nothing but a little stale fruit, which had been left unsold on the preceding day. A riot took place in consequence, the gabella being considered the cause of this disappointment. The representative of the city again made his appearance, but this time he got seriously pelted, and was compelled to retreat to the Church del Carmine.

The mob continued to increase; the spacious Piazza del Mercato was crowded, and on all sides there were heard cries of "Long live the King of Spain, and perish the bad government!" Mas' Aniello added to the strength of his troop, by distributing among them iron pikes, pieces of paling, and other weapons, which they took from the fortifications of the Carmine. He then jumped on a

* This festival is still continued.

high table, which was in the market-place, and addressed the populace. As his speech was extremely characteristic, it may be as well to give it in the words of my author.

“Joy, dear companions and brothers! Give thanks to God, and to the glorious Virgin of the Carmine, for the hour which has now arrived of your deliverance. This poor unshod man, (himself,) like a new Moses, who saved the children of Israel, will redeem you from the burden of the gabella, newly imposed; and from the tyranny and insatiable avarice of strangers, which have eternally oppressed you. A fisherman—for such was Peter—delivered from the slavery of Satan, and placed in the liberty of Christ, a Rome,—and with Rome, a world: and another fisherman, who is Mas’ Aniello, will, in the place of rigorous exactions, give you the entire enjoyment of the original abundance of Naples, and of the kingdom. From this day you will be free from the yoke which has weighed you down. For myself I care not; I may be torn to pieces; my head may be cut from my body with a sharp iron, and may be raised up in this piazza as the leader of a revolution; but I shall die contented and glorious; as-

sured that my blood and my life have been useful to my country."

This speech inflamed the minds of the people, who were indeed already fully disposed to undertake any thing their favourite might suggest. Then, "for a beginning," as my author says, they set fire to the office of the gabella, which was in the market-place, and burnt it to ashes, with all the books, writings, and furniture, which it contained. This being performed, they walked forward into the body of the city; and as they proceeded, their numbers rapidly and powerfully increased. They spread themselves into the different quarters of the town, and set fire to every office of customs, burning, as before, every thing within, not preserving even the arms; and leaving untouched large quantities of money, which had been deposited in those places. "Looking upon these things," says my author, "as the quintessence of their blood, they consecrated them indiscriminately to the fury of the flames." When they arrived at the palace, and mustered under the windows of the Viceroy, their number was above ten thousand. This immense multitude now demanded to be relieved, not only from the gabella on fruit, but from every other heavy tax, and espe-

cially from the imposition on corn. His Excellency, exceedingly alarmed by their numbers and clamour, presented himself at a balcony, and solemnly assured them they should be satisfied ; that the gabella on fruit should be entirely taken off, and a part of that on the corn. But the time had come, when the people were no longer to be appeased. The cry was general, "Long live the King of Spain, and perish, perish the bad government!"—and now, declaring their determination to be relieved from all gabelle, they rushed forward in thousands to force their way into the palace, and to speak to the Viceroy face to face. The Spanish and German guard could not resist the pressure of the angry multitude, but were soon put to flight, and crowds entered the palace. When they reached the door of his Excellency's apartment, finding it well secured within, they began, with pikes and various arms, which they had taken from the soldiers, to force an entrance. The Viceroy, thus exposed to imminent danger, attempted to fly to the neighbouring Church of San Luigi de' Padri ; but before he departed, he addressed the people from a balcony, and threw papers among them, signed by his own hand, which had the royal seal attached to them ; in

which the duty on fruit was removed, and that on corn reduced. The people, however, still demanded that he should descend to speak to them, *faccia a faccia*; and, as he endeavoured to pass unnoticed to the church, he was discovered by the mob,—some of the principals of whom entered his carriage with drawn swords, and with dreadful threats insisted on his yielding to their demands. Fearing for his life, his Excellency gave them his sacred promise, that all the obnoxious taxes should be removed. No sooner did the populace hear this, than their revilings and threats were changed into shouts of applause, and protestations of gratitude. They called the Viceroy their saviour, and kissed his hands with respect; some prostrated themselves on the earth, and others embraced his knees. At this moment his Excellency scattered some hundreds of sequins among them, which he had brought for that purpose; and when numbers of them pressed forward, anxious to collect the glittering coin, their ruler, with a considerable quantity of Spanish cavaliers and soldiers, fled into the church, which was now close at hand.

Indignant at this escape, the mob were proceeding to extremities with the church. They had broken down the outer gate, and had nearly ef-

fecting an entrance, when the Cardinal Filomarino, archbishop of the city, a personage venerated by the populace, arrived at the spot, and endeavoured to appease the tumult. A calm of a few moments succeeded his arrival; the Archbishop descended from his carriage, and placed himself before the inner door of the church; no one then offered to strike another blow, but all besought their beloved pastor to unite his endeavours with theirs, in order to obtain relief from their miseries. Another paper, signed by the Viceroy, was put into the hands of the Archbishop; upon receiving which he ascended his carriage, and holding it up as a lure to the people, proceeded along the street Toledo, drawing the chief part of the mob after him. But their rage and disappointment knew no bounds, when the Archbishop read this document, for it was found to fall far short of their demands, and of the promises of the Viceroy when he was in their power. They returned to attack the church; but his Excellency got over the walls into another religious house, and then putting himself into an old sedan chair which was found there, he was carried by some of his Spanish attendants to the Castle of Sant' Elmo.

When it was found that the Viceroy had escaped

from the convent, the people divided into many parties, and ran through every part of the city, burning obnoxious houses, forcing the arms from the soldiers, and breaking open all the prisons, except three, which they respected on account of being royal prisons. The Prince of Bisignano, a nobleman of distinction, and a great and old favourite of the people, hoped, by placing himself at their head, to prevent, in some measure, the dreadful ravages they were committing; but on making the attempt, he found that all his efforts were fruitless, and he retired. The people then declared Mas' Aniello their chief, leader, and captain. "The scene that ensued," says my author, "was so dreadful, that I cannot think of it without trembling. The loud bells of the city were ringing to arms; the blast of trumpets, the rolling of drums, the discharge of musquetry, and the tumultuous shouts of the people, resounded on every side."

On the approach of night the tumult was so dreadful, that some of the religious orders issued in procession, to restrain the rage of the people, and to implore the divine assistance. Two hours after sunset, the Viceroy, escorted by a strong troop, passed with all possible secrecy from the Castle of Sant' Elmo to the Castel Nuovo, which

he surrounded with the most numerous and best appointed part of his soldiers. He then published another conciliatory proclamation, which, however, produced no effect. By the orders of Mas' Aniello, many parties were now put on guard to prevent a surprise from the military.

On the next morning similar scenes of confusion took place, but the people were highly gratified on observing, that fruit was sold in immense quantities in the market, without gabella; and that the weight of the loaf was increased from twenty-two to thirty-two ounces. The Viceroy sent a deputation to wait on Mas' Aniello, informing him that all he had asked was granted. This declaration came too late; the people had discovered their strength, and now insisted on a renewal of all the privileges granted to them by the Emperor Charles V.: they even demanded that the castle of Sant' Elmo should be given into their hands. His Excellency sent another deputation, composed of the chief of the Neapolitan nobility, but to these the people returned a similar answer, still insisting on a renewal of their privileges; especially demanding, that in future no gabella should be levied without the consent of the representative of the city, and the concurrence and approbation of the Church of Rome.

The Viceroy, having failed in all his measures hitherto, now had recourse to superstition for help: he gave the Archbishop directions to administer the sacrament in all the churches, and to exhibit the miraculous blood and the sacred head of the glorious Protector of Naples, San Gennaro: but this also failed of effect, for the people immediately expressed their conviction that San Gennaro *was for them*—"he is on *our side*!" was the cry.

The persons of greatest weight, after Mas' Aniello, were the bandit Perrone, before-mentioned, and an old priest, named Giulio Genovino, who had been the representative of the people in the time of the Duca Ossuna, and who had long been their sturdy defender, and a sufferer in their cause. These two drew up a list of more than sixty persons, who had derived a profit from farming the gabella, and the multitude had orders to proceed against them, to burn or destroy every thing which they possessed; but on no account to appropriate to their own use any thing which might be found. Several of the mob were very promptly executed for disobeying their orders in the last particular: and now those who had been unmerciful and grasping in their exactions, "had their blood lavished like water, as a punishment for their avarice and

cruelty." Mas' Aniello now gave orders, that every person who had arms or ammunition should deliver them up for the defence of the city: by this means, a great number of carbines, musquets, and arquebuses, were obtained. In the house of a Genevese army contractor they found 4000 musquets; and from the house of a merchant they took nine pieces of cannon; nine others they took from two armed vessels; and all these they planted at the entrances of the principal streets of the city.

In the evening, the Archbishop had again recourse to processions; but Mas' Aniello told him, that, although he was very grateful to him for the holy trouble which he took, he must beg that, for the future, the priests should be kept within doors; as, otherwise, those venerable men might meet with very unpleasant accidents in the present disorderly condition of the people. At the same time, he would be most happy, he said, that they should continue their prayers and supplications for the peace and happiness of the city, *in their respective sanctuaries*. The Archbishop thought it would be well to comply with such reasonable advice; and accordingly prayers were put up in the churches from that time, until the period of Mas' Aniello's death. The next day, the same confusion

prevailed; but one thing deserves particular remark: in the house of one of those persons, who had become obnoxious to public resentment, two little barrels of sequins were found;—these the mob immediately deposited in the royal bank, for the use of the King! It chanced that the original charter of two of the most important privileges granted to the city of Naples by Charles and Ferdinand fell into their hands; these they sent to the Castel Nuovo, in order that they might be signed and acknowledged by the Viceroy; but when, after waiting patiently for some hours, they saw no symptoms of compliance, and had even reason to fear that they should not recover the charters themselves, they resolved to obtain possession of the Torre del Campanile, a place of some strength, defended by about sixty Spanish soldiers; and also of the Church of San Lorenzo, in which the archives of the city were deposited. About ten thousand persons instantly employed themselves in these undertakings: they soon compelled the soldiers to capitulate; and with the two places they obtained about eighteen pieces of cannon, which were distributed by Mas' Aniello, so as to defend his party, in the most important points: he

then ordered the prisoners to be well fed, and set at liberty.

It was observed that, among the most active of the combatants, and in the most awful scenes of destruction, many women, and even children, appeared; of whom some fought in the ranks, and others supplied the men with ammunition.

The viceroy was shut up in the castle, without provisions; a felucca, which he sent to the opposite coast for supplies, fell into the hands of the people; and he was thus reduced to a state of utter weakness and despair. He was consequently obliged to put the charter of the privilege granted by Charles V., accompanied with a promise, written in his own hand, to observe every article which it contained, into the hands of the Archbishop, who was despatched to the Piazza del Mercato, to treat with the people. When the Archbishop read this instrument, and the annexed promise, a sentiment of joy diffused itself among the people; but it soon gave place to distrust and suspicion. With loud cries they reviled and threatened the sacred ambassador for endeavouring to deceive them with a falsified copy of the charter. His Eminence, finding himself in danger, addressed himself, with great

affability, to Mas' Aniello, requesting to know the cause of this sudden disturbance? Mas' Aniello replied, "They say your Eminence wishes to betray us; but I, who know your Eminence's virtues, will believe no such thing, but will defend you against their fury at the expense of my life; therefore do not fear!" It was soon agreed, that the Archbishop should deliver the documents into the hands of some person of the popular party who was capable of judging of their authenticity. The priest Giulio Genovino was the one fixed upon: the examination, which lasted all night, was carried on in the presence of the Archbishop, Mas' Aniello, and several others; and in the morning the papers were declared to be valid. But the people, however glad to receive the charter, were still distrustful, and would place no faith in the promises of the Viceroy. They were, moreover, in great wrath respecting a certain passage in his declaration, in which he assured them, he would procure his Majesty's pardon for the acts of rebellion which they had committed. "We have been guilty of no rebellion," cried they; "we are all most faithful vassals of the King; we have risen only to obtain the privileges which were granted to us by his Majesty's glorious predecessors, Charles and Ferdi-

nand." The Archbishop, seeing that the hour of pacification had not yet arrived, retired to his palace, and the people, considering themselves insulted and betrayed, determined to proceed to extremities. On the same day, some considerable bodies of Spanish and German troops marched upon the city from the neighbouring garrisons, but were all overpowered and disarmed, and the people remained undisputed masters of the metropolis. About noon, Mas' Aniello issued an order, that wherever the portraits of the King and Queen of Spain were found, they should be put out of the windows of the house, under rich canopies, and that the arms of the people should be piled beneath them.

Another negotiation was begun the next day, by the Archbishop, in the Church del Carmine ; but it was interrupted in a very tragical manner. More than five hundred banditti, who had been collected together by Perrone, Mas' Aniello's associate, entered the city by the gate Del Carmine ; saying they had come for the service of the people : they were well mounted and armed. The shrewd and active Mas' Aniello was not long in making important discoveries : Perrone was found to be a traitor, and in fact seven arquebuses were fired at Mas'

Aniello while he was conversing with Perrone upon the best method of disposing of the troops, although he was then standing on sacred ground, and in the midst of ten thousand people; "but," says my priest, "he was not wounded, and some balls which struck on the bosom of his shirt fell to the ground, without doing him any harm; which circumstance was considered as a miracle performed in his favour by the Madonna del Carmine, whose portrait hung at his breast." The people immediately attacked those traitors, and a dreadful slaughter ensued; their blood flowed in streams before the grand altar, in the sacristy, and at the very feet of the Archbishop. Perrone was taken alive by Mas' Aniello; and on being put to the torture, he confessed that he and his troop had been employed by the Duke of Mattaloni to kill not only the fisherman and his associates, but also by a mine which was already dug, and charged with twenty-eight barrels of gunpowder, to blow up all that part of the city, and even the Convent del Carmine, under which building there was another mine well supplied. For this massacre and destruction, when accomplished, he was to receive the sum of 15,000 scudi; a promissory note for that amount, given by the Duke, was found on his per-

son. After this confession, he and his brother were beheaded ; and their heads, stuck upon poles, were exhibited in the market-place.

Among the banditti taken alive was one who, on being led out to execution, offered, on condition that his life was spared, to reveal plots of still greater horror and magnitude than those which had been confessed. The condition was agreed to, and he disclosed that on the following night numerous troops of horse were to have come and joined the five hundred banditti already mentioned, and by their united operations not only the above mines were to have been fired, but also others of enormous extent, (under the Piazza del Mercato,) which contained in the whole above fifteen thousand pounds of powder. The moment of explosion was fixed at *tre ore di notte* ; when the greatest number of the people would be assembled together, according to the orders of Mas' Aniello, to guard against any nocturnal assault. "If," says my author, with admirable *sang froid*, "this scheme had succeeded, about a hundred and fifty thousand persons, men, women, and children, would have been blown into the air, besides the numerous edifices, sacred and profane, situated thereabout." Mas' Aniello immediately ordered that the places should be explor-

ed ; the plan, he said, was too infernal for conception ; but all that had been asserted was verified by the search. From another bandit it was learned that the reservoirs and canals, which supplied the most popular part of the city with water, were to be poisoned ; and, on examination, some of them were found to be already vitiated.

The horrid rage, and the dreadful thirst for vengeance, occasioned by the discovery of these plots, may be imagined. The people ran like furies to revenge themselves on their enemies, and retaliated on them with a remorseless and indiscriminating barbarity. The Duke of Mattaloni had taken refuge in the church of Sant Efremo ; but no place, however holy, could give sanctuary to such an enemy, or arrest for a moment the deadly wrath of the populace. They broke its ponderous doors to splinters, and, rushing in, sought in every corner for the object of their hate. The Duke, however, had the good fortune to escape out of the convent ; he hurried through the city in the dress of a Capuchin friar, got to one of the barriers, where a swift steed awaited him, and vaulting into the saddle, galloped off with the utmost speed towards Benevento. A cruel fate, however, awaited his brother, who had taken refuge in the monastery of Santa

Maria della Nova : he fell into the hands of the people, and was dragged to the Piazza del Ceriglio; all his prayers for mercy, and all his offers of immense sums for the ransom of his life, were disregarded ;—a young butcher cut off his head with a large knife.

The people, suspecting the Viceroy to have been deeply engaged in those plots, determined to treat him without any ceremony : he was already deprived of provision ; they now cut off the aqueducts which supplied the castle with water. His Excellency, in this terrible situation, wrote a letter to the Archbishop, begging him to treat again with the people, and to say that he (the Viceroy) solemnly swore to deliver up every one of the conspirators that might fall into his hands : but this assertion did not entirely remove the suspicions of the people. Mas' Aniello now became more than ever the object of popular adoration ; he had but to give orders and thousands rushed to obey them : he directed that the whole city should remain under arms, to prevent a surprise from the banditti, who had joined themselves with some Spanish and German troops ; and he used every precaution which the most consummate talent and prudence could have suggested. He proclaimed the Duke of Mat-

whom a traitor to his king and country; and offered a reward of thirty thousand scudi to any person who should produce him dead or alive; and then, despatching thousands of desperate characters, among whom was one of his brothers, in search of their intended victim, the Duke, he concluded the important business of this day.

My author begins his account of the fifth day of the tumult, by expressing his surprise that "so much could be effected by a poor fisher-boy, and that such multitudes of armed and irritated people could proceed in such good order under his command, injuring none but those who had oppressed and had sought to betray and destroy them,—and, in this up-turning of right and property, without appropriating any thing to their individual advantage."

The first order issued on this day was, that under pain of death, every man should lay aside his cloak, mantle, scarf, or any part of dress under which arms might be concealed. Here my author remarks, very seriously, that it was a most strange thing to see Dominicans and Carmelites, Canons, Jesuits, and all sorts of priests, even the bishops and archbishops, walking about stripped of the most important and sightly part of their apparel.

This order extended to the women, who were directed to leave off their cloaks, aprons, &c., and to wear their petticoats shorter than usual ; so that if they carried arms beneath them, they might be detected with facility. The leader then turned his attention to the fortifying of the streets : he ordered trenches to be dug, and had his artillery mounted on carriages, that they might be moved with ease to any place of need ; he commanded the nobility and persons of property to deliver up all the arms and ammunition they had in their possession, and to send as many of their servants as they could spare to assist in the defence of the people. On this morning Mas' Aniello also fixed the prices at which provisions were to be sold.

The Viceroy, despairing of effecting any thing by other means, wrote to the Archbishop, and gave him full authority and competence to adjust a compromise with the people, on whatever conditions he might be able to obtain. The people asked nothing more, and would accept of nothing less, than they had already demanded ; the Archbishop acceded to every thing, and the Viceroy signed the treaty on the terms proposed. About four o'clock the Cardinal Archbishop proceeded with his splendid suite to read the treaty in the Church del Carmine.

Mas' Aniello stood near the Archbishop while it was read. He had worn until now his fisherman's dress, but to-day he appeared in a rich habit covered with silver. When the reading was finished, the veteran patriot Genovino addressed the people from a pulpit, and desired them to return thanks to God, and the blessed Virgin del Carmine, for their deliverance: he then began to sing the *Te Deum*. A band of musical instruments, accompanied by the organ, performed that impressive anthem, and immense numbers of people joined in it with tears of gratitude.

Genovino must have felt much himself: he had been confined nineteen years in a wretched prison, for having been implicated in an attempt made during the government of the Duke of Ossuna to obtain the same privileges for which they had now been struggling; and he was now eighty years old!

When the *Te Deum* was ended, Mas' Aniello, mounted on a beautiful charger, and with a naked sword in his hand, preceded the carriage of the Archbishop towards the palace, where, according to agreement, he was to have an interview with the Viceroy. The numbers that followed him, and the shouts of applause and congratulation that rose on all sides, were astonishing. When the procession

arrived in the square before Castello Nuovo, just by the Fontana Medina, the captain of the Viceroy's guard advanced on horseback, but unarmed, to meet it: saluting Mas' Aniello, he bade him welcome to the palace, where his Excellency (he said) with great pleasure expected his arrival. Mas' Aniello returned his salutation with much gravity and decorum; and then, making signs to the people not to move a step more forward, and to remain silent, he stood up in his stirrups and addressed them. His speech is rather too long to be translated: he begins by congratulating the people on their happy deliverance, and then desires them to say after him, who are their masters—"God!" the people shouted "God." "The Madonna del Carmine;" "the Madonna del Carmine," cried they. "King Philip; Cardinal Archbishop Filomarina; the Duke of Arcos!" they in each case instantly echoed his words. He then drew from his breast the original charters granted by Ferdinand and Charles the Fifth, and signed by the Viceroy, the Duke of Arcos, and the council of state—continuing in a louder voice,

"Now we are free, and relieved from all the burdens that oppressed us. For myself, I pretend to nothing, and wish for nothing but your good; and

this his Eminence the Archbishop (who offered me two hundred dollars per month for life, provided I left your cause and proceeded no farther) well knows. I should never have quitted my poor sailor's rags, even for a moment, had I not been compelled to do so by the Archbishop, under pain of precept, and the thunder of excommunication. Having fished up the public liberty out of the stormy sea of this afflicted city, I shall return to fish, and sell my fish as before, not reserving for myself or my house so much as a rag of cloth. The only thing I beg of you is, that, when I am dead, and gone from among you, you will every one of you say an Ave Maria for the peace of my soul: say, will you promise me this?—will you not?—will you not?"

It would be difficult to match the pathetic eloquence of this address by any thing that history records; and its dignity is equal to its pathos. The people shouted "they would—they would!" but hoped the masses would not be needed for a hundred years to come. Mas' Aniello then advised them not to lay down their arms until they received a confirmation of their privileges and their treaty from the King of Spain; and by no means to trust the nobles, who were traitors and enemies

to the people. "On this subject," adds my author, "he dwelt a long time, and used such irreverend language, that out of decency I do not repeat his words." He then added, "I am going to negotiate with his Excellency: you will see me again in an hour, or at farthest by to-morrow morning; but if I am betrayed, and do not appear among you by that time, set fire to the whole city. Will you promise me this?" "Yes: Yes!" shouted the populace, "and we will surely do it."

When Mas' Aniello had finished his address, he requested the Archbishop to bless the people: his Eminence readily complied, and putting his head out of the carriage, with two motions of the cross on each side, bestowed his pastoral benediction. Mas' Aniello then rode on, and entered the palace through a crowd of soldiers, followed by the Archbishop, who was accompanied in his carriage by Genovino, Mas' Aniello's brother, and Arpaja the new eletto or representative of the people. They were met by the Viceroy at the foot of the great staircase: the Cardinal introduced Mas' Aniello, who threw himself at the feet of his Excellency, which he kissed in the name of the people, thanking him for the grace he had bestowed upon them, and assuring him that he might dispose of his life

as he thought fit. The Viceroy with great cordiality assisted him to rise; told him he had never considered him as a criminal, and that he should for the future esteem him as a friend. "It is even asserted by some," says my author, with much caution, and a certain air of scepticism, "that his Excellency embraced the fisher-boy several times."

The Viceroy then retired, with Mas' Aniello and the Archbishop, to a private apartment, where they remained a considerable time, reasoning together on the affairs of the city. While there, they heard a dreadful noise from the people without, who, alarmed at Mas' Aniello's long stay, began to suspect that some harm had befallen him. To remove this suspicion he appeared at a balcony, accompanied by the Viceroy and the Cardinal, and, holding out his hand, cried aloud, "Here I am, safe and free! Peace, peace!"

The populace joyfully echoed the word Peace, and the bells of the neighbouring churches began to ring; but on Mas' Aniello's complaining of this, they were immediately silenced. To show the Viceroy the absolute command which he had over the people, he gave several extraordinary proofs of it; a word, the finger pressed on the lips, the least

gesture, was enough to produce the most unanimous and instantaneous obedience.

It was agreed at this interview, that the treaty should be printed, and that the Viceroy and his ministers should, on the next Saturday, go in person to the Cathedral, and, after it was read, solemnly swear to observe every article which it contained, and to use all their efforts to have it confirmed by the King. The Viceroy gave orders to the Commissary-general to obey Mas' Aniello, who was now created Captain-general of the city, in all things; and when Mas' Aniello took leave, his Excellency gave the powerful plebeian a rich gold chain worth 3000 scudi. Mas' Aniello would have refused this last compliment, but the Archbishop insisted on his accepting of it. The next morning Mas' Aniello appeared in public, giving orders, and passing judgment in his usual sailor's dress. As a judge, he was violent, but seldom unjust; he frequently exhibited great perspicacity; and he was not unfrequently mild and merciful; excepting always when the friends or family of Mattaloni were concerned, in which case he was uniformly severe. He sent the Viceroy a plentiful supply of provisions, and placed immense sums, which had fallen into his hands, in the royal treasury. The Viceroy

and his wife sent, in return, many costly presents, such as rich robes and gold chains: "a circumstance," says my author, "which in future ages will scarcely be believed; but which is yet most historically true." On the next day, which was the Saturday appointed, the treaty was read in great form by the Secretary-general of the Neapolitan nation: the Viceroy and his ministers swore to observe it, and to procure its confirmation from his Majesty the King of Spain; after which the Te Deum was sung, and then Mas' Aniello began a long speech, in which he declared the uprightness of his intentions, and mentioned his determination of returning to his original occupation, as soon as the confirmation should arrive from Spain; but till then he was resolved to keep all the power which he had obtained. Printed copies of the treaty were posted up in all the public places in the city. The joy of the people was excessive, and with the imprudence natural to an unthinking mob, they would have thrown aside their weapons, but this Mas' Aniello strictly prohibited, commanding every man to be in arms, as before, for the public safety.

From this day, the glory of Mas' Aniello grew dim: he began to feel the intoxicating nature of his situation: his head seemed to turn giddy, and

his prudence forsook him: his orders, no longer wise and decisive, were frequently countermanded; from a firm but humble democrat, he became all at once a fierce and imperious tyrant. His judgments were generally capricious and bloody; in short, he seemed no longer the same man, and even his brother-in-law was heard to say, that Mas' Aniello had gone mad; and that, if he did not desist from so many executions and conflagrations, he would himself assassinate him. On Sunday evening Mas' Aniello appeared to be completely delirious; all his words and actions were those of a madman: here my author says, "it was the opinion of most people that his intellects had been deranged by a drugged liquor, given him for that purpose by the Viceroy." On Monday, the mad tricks he played had in them much of the comic and ridiculous, but more of the frightful and tragical. Heads were struck off in dozens at his approach; he treated the first noblemen of the land with the greatest indignity, and quarrelled with, and even beat, his coadjutors, the able Arpaja, and the venerable Genovino. In the evening, he complained of a dreadful pain in his head, saying a fire was burning in his brain, and he threw himself, dressed as he was, into the sea; when he came out

he was secured, put in irons, and conducted to his house. On the same evening, Genovino and Arpaja, despairing of his recovery, entirely abandoned him, and retiring to the *Castello Nuove* concerted a plan with the Viceroy, to deprive Mas' Aniello of his power, and to make him prisoner for life. Before they proceeded to attempt at alienating the people from him, they stipulated that his life should be spared on account of the good he had done, and that the treaty which he had made should be punctually observed.

The next morning was the festival of the Virgin of Carmine: Mas' Aniello, who had just broken loose from his irons, entered that crowded church a few minutes before the Archbishop, who was on that day to celebrate grand mass. When the Archbishop entered, Mas' Aniello approached him, crying in a tone of despair,—“I see the people begin to forsake me, and wish to betray me: be it so; I only desire for mine, for the people's consolation, that a solemn procession, in which the Viceroy, his ministers, and the authorities of the city may form a part, should be made on this day to the shrine of this most holy Virgin. Having to die, I shall in this manner die contentedly.”

When the Cardinal was proceeding to perform

the religious ceremonies, Mas' Aniello ascended a pulpit, and, taking a crucifix in his hand, conjured the people to remember all that he had done for them, and not to abandon him. He spoke for some time in a very sane manner, and seemed to have recovered his former eloquence and reason; but, on seeing the eyes of the people either averted, or turned on him with anger and contempt, and that even his body-guards were forsaking him, he lost all command of himself, and burst out into delirious ravings. The Cardinal, who was thus interrupted in his services, despatched some monks to make Mas' Aniello descend: he offered no resistance, indeed he was incapable of making any, for he had exhausted himself, and large drops of sweat were rolling down his face. By the order of the Archbishop he was carried to the dormitory of the monks and laid upon a bed.

The religious ceremonies were finished, and the Archbishop retired from the church to his palace. In the mean time Mas' Aniello, having changed his dress, which was wet with perspiration, went from the dormitory into a little saloon that had a balcony overlooking the sea; he was leaning over this to catch the cooling air, when some gentlemen, accompanied by a great number of armed men,

entered the church, crying "Long live the King of Spain, and let no one under pain of death obey Mas' Aniello any longer!"—From the church they passed into the cloisters, pretending to wish to negotiate with Mas' Aniello. When he heard his name called, he came undauntedly forward to meet them, exclaiming,—“Here I am, my friends.” In that moment four arquebuses, each loaded with ten square balls, were discharged at the fated victim, who, uttering the words, “Ungrateful traitors!” rolled a corpse at the feet of his assassins. A butcher, who was passing by, was called in to cut off his head, which having placed on a spear, the murderers entered the church, where above eight thousand people were assembled, and thence they went into the market-place, crying,—“Mas' Aniello is dead—long live the King of Spain,—and let no one mention the name of Mas' Aniello!”

The spectacle of the bleeding head of their leader, and the discharge of a few arms without ball, were sufficient to disperse that mob which had for ten days been absolute masters of the city: they retired without so much as striking a blow to avenge the death of a man who had procured them such immense benefits.

The body of Mas' Aniello was thrown into one

of the fosses of the city, and his brothers and sisters, wife, mother, and every relative, found in Naples, were taken prisoners, and confined in the castle: to ingratiate himself with the people, the Viceroy, however, very soon gave orders for their release.

On the evening of the same day in which Mas' Aniello was killed, the Viceroy had the privileges of Charles the fifth again read with much solemnity in the market-place, and again swore strictly to observe every article of them, as well as of the treaty he had made. The people were contented, and in the cries of long live the King of Spain, and the Duke of Arcos, and with the prospect of cheap bread, fruit and oil, "forgot the ill-fated Mas' Aniello, almost before his body was cold."

The Dominican.

—— Fo voto a Dio, ch' egli se n' avrà a pentire. Se m'ajuti Iddio, come io gli farò vedere, quanto importa a far saltar la bile ai Frati.

Il Matrimonio di Fra Giovanni, Atto I. Scena 8.



The Dominican,

A STORY OF THE PLAGUE OF NAPLES.

DURING a short repose from the calamities of famine, earthquakes, seditions, domestic and foreign wars, depredations of the piratical Turks, and the scarcely less formidable excursions of troops of banditti, which, all united, had for many months afflicted the kingdom of Naples, a splendid festival was held in the large square before the palace, in the month of May 1656.

The Spanish Viceroy, Haro Count di Castrillo, and his court, presided with full Spanish state. The principal amusements of the day were a tourney and a bull fight; for the Spaniards carried their tastes with them into Italy, and the Neapolitans have more than the ordinary aptitude of assuming the tastes of the conqueror or master. Many a gay Andalusian dress was flaunted that

day in the honoured arena ; many a youthful eye was raised to the ladies on the surrounding seats, to read the effect of a fine figure on a bounding steed, of an expert pass, or of a hazardous exploit : there was a mighty driving of spurs, and pushing of horns and spears, a copious gushing of hot red blood, and the usual accompaniments of clapping hands and waving handkerchiefs.

Among the young heroes of the day there was one, who by the superior elegance of his equipments, the studied grace of his evolutions, and the boldness of his action, seemed bent on attracting marked attention ; and from the court balcony there was an eye that never took itself off him, and whose kindly glance might well be deemed deserving of his ambition. The Marchesa di —— was a young widow, rich, and full of grace and beauty. In the circle where she sat, were many dames, lofty in nobility, and in the consciousness of possessing real and visible claims to admiration and reverence ; but her tall elastic figure, arrayed in the purest fashion of the times, her exquisite features, the extraordinary delicacy of her complexion, and an expression of deep sensibility, which nothing diminished the dignity of her whole appearance, distinguished her from the rest ; and

if her glances were reserved for one only of the combatants, they were sighed for by all. Filipetto, the young Count di —, was her acknowledged lover; and that his affection was returned nobody could doubt who saw that day, at the moment his temerity had placed him in peril, how she suppressed a scream, and hurried her long white hands over her eyes to conceal what she dreaded to see; and how, when the plaudits of the multitude reassured her, she raised her pale face, which quivered and glowed anon as she saw him in safety, looking up to her from the opposite side of the arena.

As soon as the cruel sports were over, and prizes had been awarded to such of the amateur performers as had distinguished themselves, Filipetto, preceded by a page, hastened to join his expecting mistress. In forcing his way through the crowd, he met with obstacles and delays, and more than one plebeian felt the application of his noble hand: at length he had forced his way over a deep order of benches, and was close to the court lodge, and within sight of the Marchesa; but here an unyielding group would pay no attention to the shrill "*Avanti! avanti!*" of the page, and the gigantic figure of a Dominican friar stood like a rock in his way. When the stripling touched the broad sleeve

of his dress, to warn him of the approach of his Excellency the Count, he grasped him by the collar and shook him. Filipetto would readily have rewarded this insupportable insolence by attempting to hurl the monk into the arena, but the holy calling of the offender protected him ; he, however, rushed rudely by, and nearly overturned him. The next moment he was leaning over his mistress's seat, without having observed the expression with which the Dominican resented his affront ; and even had he seen it, he would have been far from suspecting it as the herald of the boundless wretchedness that was so soon to overwhelm him.

That night the gilded halls of the Viceroy resounded with music and dancing, and the jest and the careless laugh of gaiety : as though the revelers were aware they were taking a farewell of festivity, they plunged into it with unusual zest, and prolonged it until the risen sun shone on the white walls of the elevated monastery of San Martino. Many a dance was gone through that night by forms replete with youthful vigour, and buoyant with lightness of heart, that were never to dance again ; many a sigh was poured out to forms that were to be in a few days objects of horror and dread—foul things, to be avoided as the ministers

of death; many a plan was that night formed, never, never to be accomplished; and many a point of courtly etiquette between haughty nobles and presuming placemen was discussed for the last time.

But a few days after the fête, a report was made to the Viceroy that an alarming mortality prevailed in Naples.* As the malady spread rapidly, and apparently by contagion, it was soon traced to the public hospital *dell' Annunziata*, where a soldier, lately landed from Sardinia, had died. As this man's body, after death, was covered with minute livid spots, and as all those who had assisted him had since been taken ill, it was naturally inferred that the plague had been introduced into the city. But the Viceroy, who dreaded such a sequel to the many miseries that had *illustrated* his government, flew into an extremity of rage, when this opinion was referred to him: he threw a physician, who had the imprudent courage to tell him the truth, into a dungeon of the castle, and decided imperiously and absolutely, that there should be no plague in Naples.

The plague, however, it was, and in its very worst

* Giannone, Storia Civile.

character, and already widely spread. A ship full of soldiers from Sardinia, where the plague was raging, although strict prohibitions existed against any communication with that island, was, by some evasion, or for some urgent motive on the part of the government, admitted at once to *pratique*: the soldier that died in the hospital came from this vessel, and he was not the only one infected; in fact, the destructive fire had been lighted at the same time in several of the lower quarters of the town.

The Archbishop of Naples, whose rank exempted him from danger in differing in opinion with the Viceroy, at length made a spirited remonstrance, and urged the necessity of precautionary decisions; but the Count di Castrillo, who, besides the reason above mentioned, dreaded the extension of such a belief, from the necessity of complying with the orders of his court to send a body of troops to strengthen the Spaniards against the French, in the Milanese, which operation would have been impeded by such rumours, still persisted that the malady was not the plague, and continued in his philosophic incredulity. Thus, owing to infatuation, or rather wilfulness, the contagion was extended over the provinces of the kingdom, and a

dreadful process of extermination commenced. Induced by popular complaint, the Viceroy called together the most reputed physicians of the time, to hold a consultation on the nature of the disease; and these *peritissimi dottori*, either from ignorance or fear, or a desire of seconding the wishes of the Viceroy, did not declare the evil pestilential, and confined themselves to issuing a few regulations; some of which were unmeaning, and the whole inefficacious. The crowded city lost every day its hundreds; and according to the Neapolitan historian Giannone, nothing was seen in the streets but melancholy processions, carrying the sacrament to the dying, or the dead to the sepulchre.

This pitiless destruction hurried the ignorant population to every excess of superstition; and the processions to venerated shrines, and the crowding after saints and madonnas, assisted the diffusion of the fatal malady. The evil was carried to its height by some fanatic or interested devotees, who seized that moment of affliction and weakness to rumour through the town that Suor Orsola Benincasa, a religious woman who had been dead some years, in her last sainted moments had prophesied, that in a season of extreme calamity the Neapolitans would build a monastery for her sisters, (who,

woe the while ! had not as yet a comfortable dwelling,) on the side of the hill of San Martino, and thus avert from the city the scourging hand of Heaven. This consoling information was received with transport ; for the public mind was prepared for the reception of any absurdity in the shape of devotion ; and the Viceroy seemed not to be a whit more prudent or less superstitious than his subjects : for as soon as the design of the building was sketched, and the ground lines drawn, he carried with his own hands twelve baskets of earth, to contribute to the atoning edifice. Incited by their own frenetic superstition, and encouraged by the example of the head of the government, all classes hurried to contribute, not only money, but manual labour, to raise the monastery. Not boxes or baskets, but open casks were placed at the corner of the streets, to receive the contributions ; and many families despoiled themselves of the best part of their fortunes, to raise and endow this stone-and-mortar saviour of their country. “ But what excited the greatest surprise,” says our historian, “ was to see persons of quality, among whom were even ladies, in emulation of one another, mixing in the lowest labours ; some carrying baskets of nails, some bundles of ropes, some barrels of lime, some

loads of stones ; some acting as labourers to the masons ; some carrying on their shoulders heavy wooden beams, with the risk of sinking under their burdens." The consequences that ensued from this continual crowd, gathered from every part of the town, were terrible, but natural : the infection that had been hitherto excluded from some of the higher quarters, now spread over all ; and as the holy Romitorio di Suor Orsola rose, the city sank faster and faster into the tomb.

Scarcely a family in Naples was exempted from the dreadful penalty, but on few did it fall more heavily than on the noble house of the Marchesa di ——. As they partook in the devotional spirit of the age and country, her father and brother had taken an active part in the building of Suor Orsola ; the plague was communicated to them in the crowd — they died ; and the youthful widow was left in the splendid palace, in the midst of diseased or raving attendants. The family of her lover, the Count di —, had been wiser and more fortunate, for at the beginning of the mortality the father had closed up his house and secured it against all ingress. Their houses were opposite, and the two lovers, who could no longer meet, could still see each other from their balconies, and, as Neapolitan

streets are not wide, even hold converse together. The scenes that passed in the street that separated them were replete with anguish and horror: poor houseless wretches were seen from time to time dropping dead, or stretched under gateways shrieking in torment and blaspheming in despair; every now and then large uncovered cars heaped with dead passed by, drove by unfortunate Moorish prisoners condemned to this dangerous office, who by their costume, dark complexions, and reprobated faith, accumulated horrors on the existing misery. To all this was added the continual recurrence of popular commotions, of infuriate mobs running through the streets and imprecating curses on their rulers; for an opinion had gained ground among these poor ignorant wretches, that the malady did not proceed from Heaven, but from the infernal contrivances of the Spaniards, who had employed a number of men to disseminate certain magical powders that produced the plague, and thus revenged themselves on the Neapolitan people for the revolts and disturbances they had lately committed.

These were not scenes congenial to love; but it is part of that vigorous passion to triumph over circumstances. Besides the feeling consolations

which Filipetto offered with so much eloquence, and which the Marchesa received with tears that relieved her agitated bosom, the precariousness of their own fate, and their mutual apprehensions and hopes, made them lengthen these interviews, and it was only when the hands had waved from the lips in melancholy adieu, that they felt all the horrors of their situation.

Some time had passed in this manner, when one day the Marchesina appeared not at the accustomed balcony; the Count's heart was racked with apprehensions: another day elapsed, and another—yet she appeared not; and all that time sleep visited not the agonized lover, who could scarcely be prevailed upon to take the scanty sustenance necessary to support life, or to leave the window for a moment. He stood there, even during the scorching sun of mid-day, hoping at least to attract the attention of some one within his mistress's house; but his long watching and his piercing cries were of no avail, her habitation seemed deserted, and he could never see either window or door open. It was now the fourth day of this suffering, and the evening hour, for the church bells of the city were sounding the Ave Maria; he was leaning over the balcony, almost attenuated by anguish

and want of nourishment and repose, when the sharp ring of the sacrament bells was heard at a short distance; those death-boding sounds were then so familiar to the ear, that they passed almost unnoticed; Filipetto, however, started when he saw the procession, with burning wax torches, turn the corner of his street—it advanced, and stopped at the portal of the Marchesina's palace! The unhappy youth sickened; the flames of torches, multiplied to infinity, flashed on his distracted eye; he saw, as through an atmosphere of fire, that the heavy gates rolled back on their hinges, that the priest, carrying the mystical bread, entered, and he heard the hand-bells that accompanied him cease ringing, and the mournful chant of voices rise within. Conviction flashed upon his mind. "Amalia is dying," said he. "I know it must be she!" A violent convulsion shook him, and he fell to the floor. He was found by his attendant, lifeless and writhed, like a man that had died in horror: being carried to his couch, he revived, but the minute that followed his revival he flew into frantic madness.

The task imposed on his family for several days was indeed hard and cruel; his shrieks, his raving, his despair, were heart-rending: at length his

frenzy sank like a fire that lacks fuel; his physical strength was exhausted, and he remained motionless without opening either eyes or lips. One morning, after nearly a month had passed, and his family despaired of his return to health or reason, he called his favourite valet as he saw him entering the chamber, and desired him to bring him a little box that was on his toilette. The man, expressing his joy at hearing his master speak again in his usual manner, obeyed the order. Filipetto took a miniature portrait of the Marchesina from the box, gazed at it for a long time, then kissed it, and hung it round his neck: he afterwards read some letters, folded them again, and put them in the box, which he returned to his servant. The poor man, overjoyed, immediately informed him that the Marchesina was not dead; that she had had the plague, but had miraculously recovered. Filipetto was bewildered, and it was not until Giacometto had repeated his words three or four times, that he took in their meaning with precision: when, however, he comprehended and credited the fact, he remained a few minutes in reflective silence, after which, by the help of the valet, he arose from his bed and walked about the room, asking a number of questions in a hurried but rational manner. The

happy news of the recovery of the young Count ran through the palace, and his chamber was soon crowded with his parents, his relations, and the domestics of the house, who all hurried to felicitate with him in tenderness and jubilee of heart. To all these effusions of affection Filipetto replied but little; indeed, he seemed almost unconscious of the greater part, and wrapped up in some absorbing reflection.

The following morning, in spite of the noisy opposition of his family, he rose, and dressed himself with more than ordinary care. After he had written for a few minutes, he despatched Giacometto to do something that would occupy him for a certain time; and then securing the door of his apartment, he hastened to carry into effect a determination he had made almost as soon as he had ascertained the existence of the Marchesina. He took the covering from the bed, and some strong silk curtains from the windows, and, tying these together, formed a line sufficiently long to reach the ground; he fastened it to the railing of the balcony, and by its means, with great danger and difficulty, he descended to the street, which, like most streets in Naples then, was silent and empty. He ran across the way without losing a moment, and knocked loudly at the

Marchesa's palace. A porter he had never seen before, and to whom he was unknown, slowly opened to him; Filipetto paused not to answer his queries, but, rushing by him, crossed the courtyard, and ascended the marble stairs. In the great hall, that used to be crowded with attendants, he met not a soul; through the long suite of apartments he traversed, the same solitude and abandonment reigned; it seemed as though he were pacing the mansions of the dead, and the noise of the heavy doors as they closed after him, sounded like peals of thunder in a catacomb. He reached the apartments of the Marchesa; he passed her antechamber, her saloon, her sitting-room, and entered her boudoir, but still he met nobody. Here lay her lute, which, as the door folded, uttered a sad tone that made him start; there were books of music, an embroidering frame, and her long black veil; her slender bodice, her rose-coloured slippers, and other articles of dress, scattered in disorder, apparently as she had left them. A little dog, that lay on a cushion, rose and dragged itself to his feet, and looked supplicatingly in his face:—it was Amalia's favourite, but so reduced and miserable that he scarcely knew it. At the door of her bedchamber he heard the low murmur of voices, as if in prayer:

—his was not a situation for pause and reflection—nobody appeared, he lifted the latch, and entered abruptly. What a scene presented itself to his eyes ! The young, the brilliant Marchesa was reclining in a *fauteuil*, and, at the first glance, presented rather the appearance of a dead woman, or of a wax effigy, than that of a living being : disease had reduced her to a shadow, but had not been able to annihilate her charms ; or rather, for her luxuriant loveliness, it had substituted a beauty more pure—more holy. She was dressed in the sombre weeds of penitence and abnegation : a coarse black serge robe, trimmed with white crape at the bosom and sleeves, and down the front, wrapped closely her tall ethereal figure ; her fine, small feet were bare, and supported on a black velvet cushion ; her thin lily hands were crossed over her breast ; her long raven hair, parted over her ivory brow, fell down her neck, and was brought forward over her shoulders and bosom. On either side of her was a starch Dominican monk, in the black and white dress of the order ; an old female attendant behind supported her head ; opposite to her was an image of the *Madonna adorata*, with the seven daggers, emblematical of the seven mortal pains of the mother of Jesus, stuck in her heart ; and at the back of the

room was a large crucifix, the tortured figure on which was as appalling a one as was ever used to extort penitence from an obdurate sinner. The light of day was excluded, and the wax tapers that burned before the Madonna and the crucifix, cast a pale yellow sickly illumination through the chamber: the most powerful exterior circumstances that monkish zeal and ingenuity could devise for producing an effect were accumulated in the scene; and even a firm heart, and one not interested in the principal figure, could not have beheld it without emotion.*

Filipetto's heart died within him at once, though he could not observe the details of the horrid show. The Marchesa's eye caught the form of the intruder; a faint scream escaped her, and she sank back deprived of sense. He fell on his knees before her; he seized her clayey hands; he kissed them convulsively, and supplicated her to speak to her adorer. One of the monks, as if there had been sacrilege in the act and words of the distracted youth, rose impetuously from his seat, and told him, in a voice of authority, to retire. "Why hast thou forced thyself here, frantic boy?" said he bitterly; "dost thou want to destroy a being in the bright com-

* All this is an unexaggerated description of a scene the writer of this tale witnessed in a noble Neapolitan house.

mencement of her sainted career? wouldst thou interpose thy mundane passions between her and Heaven? Begone, and hope not to lead back to the vanities of the world, and to the sins of human affections, one voluntarily devoted henceforth to the purifying retirement of a monastery!"—"A monastery!—a monastery!—my Amalia to a monastery! my hope, my love, my life!" cried Filippo, astounded and rising up. He looked at his unwelcome monitor; he saw the hard features of the monk he had roughly treated at the bull-fight, and he read in them his sentence to despair.

During the progress of the plague, many members of the different monastic orders showed great strength of mind and contempt of danger, in attending the sick and administering the consolations and solemnities of religion to the dying; to this they were in a certain manner bound by their institutions, and doubtlessly numbers so acted in fulfilment of their duty, and from a genuine Christian spirit: but seasons of calamity have ever been productive to the extorting hand of the priesthood of a superstitious church, and some there were who braved the risks, flattered by the hope of extending their influence, of securing donations, and of adding wealth and importance to their orders. Motives

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like these led the wary Padre Torpietro into the desolated abode of the Marchesa: he attended her father and her brother, and with them his interests fared well, but it was when *she* was seized by the plague that he secured a prize indeed, by inducing her to bequeath a large estate of her property to the Church. Contrary to all expectation, her constitution triumphed over her disorder, and this opened a still wider field to the crafty, insatiable Torpietro. That a person could recover from the plague otherwise than by a miracle, was impossible! The Marchesa had been preserved by a peculiar exertion of divine favour, which had been conciliated by her devotion and liberality, and the prayers of the Holy Church. This of course prescribed the line of her future conduct; her devotion was unremitting, and new donations were poured into Torpietro's lap, which encouraged him to attempt a still more considerable and glorious acquisition. Every thing seemed to promise him success: Amalia was sunk beneath the weight of sorrow; she had been educated in the monastery of Santa Chiara; she was blinded by the superstition of the age and country, and prepared by her recent danger, her present fears and weakness, to take almost any course pointed out by

devotion. Torpietro proposed to her to renounce the world, to resign her wealth, and to dedicate to Heaven a life saved by its mercy. Her love for Filipetto was the only obstacle to the Monk's designs, but this retained the poor fanatic with a firm grasp; and for him she hesitated to enter upon a path, to which she felt her duty call her, and which, she was convinced, would lead her by a flowery way to eternal bliss. When the persevering Torpietro discovered this hindrance, he bound himself up in firm determination, and what he had before proposed, he vowed to enforce and insist on with all his might, with all the arms that credulity, superstition, and terror furnished; for he had huddled in his bosom the trifling insult he had received from the young Count, and he now saw an opportunity of satisfying his revenge and ambition with the same blow. So successful were the machinations of the Monk and an auxiliary he called in, that she was led by degrees to look upon her passion as a crime; to believe she had been miraculously saved, for the express purpose of devoting herself to the service of Heaven; and finally, solemnly to pledge her word to embrace the monastic life. This promise had been secured two days before the appearance of Filipetto; his pre-

sence would probably have withheld her from the rash engagement ; and even now, the monks feared he might have power enough over the heart of his mistress to induce her to recant. Torpietro endeavoured to make him retire from the chamber before Amalia should recover : “ Go hence, young man,” said he ; “ your presence here can only be injurious to the Marchesa and to yourself ; you see to what a state your madness has reduced her ; away, and trouble her no longer—go, and in prayers and humility of heart resign yourself to the will of the Almighty ; for the woman before you can no longer have any thing in common with you ; she is affianced to Christ.”—“ It cannot be, false monk !” said Filipetto ; “ it cannot be !—a prior engagement, sanctioned by long affection, and by the approving voice of Heaven, gives her to me !” “ A prior engagement !” retorted the Dominican ; “ a human engagement, a futile thing, the sport of every caprice, of every breath of wind ; originating in the fervour of young blood, of human passions, of lust and enjoyment, vanity and sin, must not be opposed—no, not for one instant opposed—to a sacred devotion, an endless love inspired by Heaven ! The pretension is sacrilegious, and will draw down curses on your head.—Oh, away ! and trou-

ble not a heart that by the particular exertions of divine care has been estranged from such vanities, and for ever!"—"I cannot, I will not credit your words," said Filipetto, "and I will not away! No! I will recall the past to my Amalia; I will paint her my sufferings and despair, and I know she will not abandon me."—"Rash, vicious boy!" exclaimed Torpietro, his eyes glistening fire; "and you dare call in doubt the words of the minister of the Lord; you dare struggle with your sinful passions and desires against the will of the Omnipotent! Why do the thunderbolts of divine vengeance sleep! But by the sanctity of the altar I serve, you shall do nought of this: and though all unused to strife and turmoil, the hands of myself and brother shall thrust you hence." The offended, haughty spirit of the young noble bounded within him; he laid his hand to his sword: "Vile wretch! and you threaten violence to one of my house? If you were not protected by the calling which you disgrace by pursuing the worst of passions—for I remember now the day of the festival, and your offended pride—by my honour! I would drive your low-born soul from your body!"—"Oh, mother of God!" uttered the Marchesa, who had been slowly recovering, "what is it I hear? Oh, Filipetto, desist and

leave me, for we must not meet as in times past: we must never meet again—the rest of my days are devoted to Heaven. I will pray for you, Filippo, but prayers and tears are all I can henceforth give you.” The young Count rushed to her side, and embraced that form, wont to repose in his encircling arms with delicious trepidation, but that now struggled from them as from the grasp of incest or sacrilege. “My Amalia, my life! what say you? do you not remember our plighted troth?—our long nourished and virtuous passion? Is it possible that you can have determined to leave me to perish in hopeless anguish?”—“Before the sanctity of subsequent engagements, those of past weaknesses are dissipated, as the shades of night before the rising sun,” said Torpietro. “Before the sanctity of subsequent engagements, those of past weaknesses are dissipated as the shades of night before the rising sun,” reiterated the Marchesa, repeating the Monk’s apophthegm, word for word; and it was thus, by making their charges echo without examination their sapient opinions and dogmas, that the men of the cowl and *sottana* instructed them how to comport themselves in this world, and to merit the next. “But,” replied the Count, “nothing can break the bond of two hearts;

nothing can annihilate the fervent vows that have escaped our lips ; nothing can justify your abandoning me to the horrors of balked affection and to maddening despair. I cannot live without you, Amalia ! and when you imprison yourself in a monastery, you open me a tomb to which I shall descend with execration !”—“ Oh impiety !—oh horror !” cried the monks together. “ Oh impiety ! oh horror !” repeated the Marchesa ; but the impassioned pleading of her lover had penetrated deep into her heart, and an agonizing struggle had already commenced between her ancient passion and the overwrought devotion and appalling superstition that had lately been forced upon her. She no longer weakly struggled in his arms, but reposed her drooping head upon his breast ; she tried to speak calmly : “ Filipetto, you too have had the plague ; you are sadly changed ; you are yet ill—oh, why did you come here ?”—“ No,” returned he, “ I have not had the disease ; my father’s precautions have been availing ; our house has been saved—but I have been ill, mad, in the horrors of the accursed—and all for you !”—“ Oh mercy !” cried the Marchesa, recovering a surprising degree of energy ; “ what have you done ? the infection may still linger about me—yes, you will take it, and I shall

be your murderer."—"Be it even so," said the Count, embracing her still closer, and holding her pale lips to his; "let me here drink in death; 'twill be sweeter thus than when dealt by your abandoning me!—Oh, Amalia! if you knew what I have suffered—if you knew the anguish that has burnt up my heart and maddened my brain,—if you knew the immensity of my love, even in the midst of my despair, not the instant promise of a saintly crown in Heaven would lure you from my arms!" "You blaspheme!" exclaimed Torpietro—"you profane the plighted spouse of Christ; you are provoking the tardy but dreadful vengeance of Heaven, and exposing yourself to the wrath and punishment of God's insulted ministry.—Beware!—And you, daughter—what is it you do?—you fill my soul with horror and dread.—I see the blessed Mother of God there before you, writhing as though another poniard were thrust in her lacerated breast; I see your Redeemer there, struggling on the cross as though tortured by a pang more cruel than all his persecutors could devise.—A flaming gulf opens beneath your feet—myriads of demons laugh aloud, as they run to prepare torments for an apostate soul! Ha! ha!—I cannot look—I cannot think—join me in prayer!" The Marchesa shrieked with

affright, and falling on her knees, united her fervent prayers with the monks'; and though the Count's mind was of a stronger temper, he too shuddered. When the praying ended, the Marchesa mildly, but firmly, insisted that Filipetto should retire; he went slowly out of the room, reproaching her with his looks, and with a heart much sadder than when he entered: Torpietro's companion followed him. The Count, on reaching the sitting-room, threw himself on a sofa; the monk, who thought to accompany him to the street-door, soon took the liberty of asking him when he meant to go home; to this Filipetto replied, that he did not intend to leave that house; that, moreover, he could not go home, as he knew his father would not expose the safety of all the rest of the family by admitting him, just come from a person that had lately had the plague. This determination, when carried to Torpietro, excited his uneasiness extremely: he dreaded, and with reason, the repetition of such interviews as that which had just passed; and he proposed to the lady to have her lover forcibly conveyed to his monastery, and confined in a cell until the plague should end; or, at least, until she should be out of the reach of his persecutions. This proposal, however well glossed

over, she rejected, and with such warmth that he perceived it would be too full of risk to attempt any thing against the Count; he could not even make her promise to shut herself up and see him no more: she also feared her weakness, but could not determine to leave him in unmitigated despair. The wily monks once more recurred to the fearful horrors of superstition; and having, as they thought, created a powerful antidote to her natural impulses and womanly feelings, they left her for a few hours.

The sad ruminations of Filipetto, or rather his stupefaction, had, in the mean time, been disturbed by an old, favourite domestic of the house. Onofrio started on seeing the Count fixed like a statue in his mistress's room; and after condoling with him, and wondering how he got there, told him that his family was crying for him in the greatest alarm from the opposite balconies. "Tell them," cried he wildly, "that I am here, and that they need take no care for me." The bewildered servant did his behest, and returned after some time with two of his companions. Filipetto did not observe them; he continued motionless and silent, his eyes fixed on the ground, and his countenance expressing the full extent of mortal anguish—

“ Ah ! Signor Conte,” said Onofrio, “ woeful days are these ! the good old Prince is gone, and the Principino too, and my mistress Donna Amalia——”

“ Donna Amalia ! — what of Amalia ?” cried Filippo, turning his eyes wildly on the old man.

“ Alas ! Signor, she will leave us ! — when the plague spared her, I did not think we should so soon lose her — it is true she will become a saint ; but it will be a sorrowful day for me, and for us all ; when she abandons us.” — “ A sorrowful day, indeed !” said the Count bitterly ; and then falling into fury, added, “ But that day shall not arrive ! she is my love, my affianced bride ; I will assert my rights, I will — against earth and Heaven !” — “ But her vow cannot be retracted,” said Onofrio. “ It would be impiety to attempt it,” said another of the servants. “ A miracle has saved her,” said the other, “ and her eternal welfare requires the sacrifice she has made.” — “ Ah ! yes, Signor Count,” continued Onofrio, weeping, “ she must leave us. I did not expect this, and it is cutting ; I thought I should serve your Excellencies until my death, and see you happy together, and nurse your children on my knee ; but the will of God and of the Church be done — now we may all go and be miserable : I shall be left upon the world in my old days.

She was certainly the sweetest, dearest lady ! she could make all near her so happy — alas ! alas ! But she will be a saint, I'm sure, and that's something." Filipetto groaned with anguish, and the old man continued his lamentations in such a manner as almost maddened his auditor.

When the Dominicans passed through the room, Torpietro paused awhile, and gazed with satisfaction on his victim ; a flash of exultation passed over his harsh countenance ; the submissive domestics kissed his hand and asked his benediction : he pronounced the words of Christian charity, and went away with the passions of a fiend revelling in his heart.

After a while the Count endeavoured to gain admittance to the chamber ; the Marchesa denied him this, and he passed several hours alone, a prey to the bitterest feelings. In the afternoon the monks returned, and shut themselves up with the Marchesa for a long time ; when they left her, the Count renewed his endeavours, and she, unable to resist his supplications longer, at last admitted him. The scene that followed was heart-rending, and an eternal reproach to the spirit that had brought about such a crisis : the unhappy youth again, with burning energy, pleaded the cause of his love ;

he painted his despair in such ghastly colours that Amalia forgot herself in him; he vanquished all her objections, he surmounted all her difficulties, and intimated that, with her wealth and influence, it would not be difficult to obtain the Pope's dispensation for the vow she had made. Nature and affection were getting the masterdom in her heart, when, during a pause, the terrors of apostasy which Torpietro had awakened, rushed full into her mind; and then too she remembered that the wealth Filippetto spoke of was no longer her's — and perhaps this latter earthly consideration, amidst all her excited spirituality, was not without force in chaining her to the funereal car in which she had embarked her fate.

The deep, inexhaustible stream of human feelings is not, however, to be dried up; its course is not to be stopped by the dikes of artificial prejudices: as the water, in spite of hindrances, finds its way from the mountain to the plain, so will that stream force its way to its lawful domain, — the heart, and range through it uncontrolled. Even while Amalia insisted on the necessity of fulfilling her vow, and on the iniquity of holding such converse with him, tears and sighs accompanied every word: he made her lose sight of the glorious goal

to which she was hastening, and the certitude of his despair outdid the terrors of the perdition she was running the hazard of incurring. This sad intercourse lasted far into the night, and did not terminate until they were both quite exhausted. The hours they spent on their uneasy couches were dreadful: during the short slumbers of the Marchesa, visions, originating in her love and fear, presented her the most distressing scenes: now she was with the Count in a splendid hall on her marriage night, revelling in bliss; anon the hall was transformed into a fiery cavern, and the friendly company into hideous fiends: now she found herself in the lofty monastic choir, hymning with her sister nuns, and elevated by devotion to Heaven; and then, the picture changing, showed her her lover, in rage and despair, raising his hand against his own life. When she awoke from these convulsing dreams, she was but little relieved, for her cruel fate, the clashing division in her heart, racked her with anguish; the aspect of her lofty, sombre apartment, the illuminated, distressing images of the Madonna adolorata and the crucifix, aggravated her susceptibility and distracted her anew with terrors. Torpietro and his colleagues, returning in the morning, found her in an appalling condition.

The penetrating Monk saw in a moment the effects of the interview of the preceding evening, and collected all his force to counteract them. After a long combat he finally triumphed over the superstitious and enfeebled young creature, and even engaged her to retire secretly that very night, to a small lodging he would secure in the house of a priest adjoining Santa Chiara, where she might remain undisturbed until the doors of the monastery could be opened for her; he also undertook to prepare in silence the few other things necessary for her removal.

Amalia reserved her last interview with Filippetto till the evening; she prepared herself for it by conjuring up all the dark sophistry of her spiritual teachers, by summoning up all the fearful demons of monkish superstition, by covering herself with potent relics, by praying, and by beating her beautiful unoffending bosom. When the moment came, she had indeed need of supernatural strength; her lover appeared before her in the most affecting guise that one human being could present to another; he renewed his entreaties, and he added reproaches that showed the distraction of his mind;—her heart wavered, but in an instant of firmness she dismissed him. But when she saw his dejected

figure retiring slowly through the door of her room, and looking at her reproachingly, her resolution sank again; the thought too of its being the last time she should ever speak to him, occurred to her with fearful might, and she beckoned him to return. "Filipetto—do—oh! do not leave me in anger!" said she; "Heaven knows my affliction is already immeasurable—you surely would not add to it! Forget me! forget that I have ever existed; but ah, no, do not so!—you cannot do so.—Pray for me—pray for me!—perhaps—oh! my heart, my heart!" She arose from her arm-chair, she stood trembling—she endeavoured to speak, but could give utterance to nothing but a murmur, indistinct and awful—a torrent of bitter tears flowed down her beautiful face—she grasped her lover's hand, she staggered, and fell within his arms. Filipetto's reason abandoned him; he embraced her, he strained her to his heart; he pressed burning kisses on her lips, her neck, her bosom, and drank her tears as they fell. Amalia's brain reeled; the prospect of perdition disappeared, the voice of an outraged Deity was heard no more, and she partook in the mad passion of her adorer; her heart beat against his, her arms embraced his neck, and she poured the breath of her very soul to his lips.

A tremendous flash awoke her from this perilous intoxication; she released herself from Filipetto's grasp, and bade him again retire. As soon as he disappeared, she rushed wildly to the large crucifix, and laced her arms around the image, as though it alone could protect her from the passions of her heart. In this state she was found late in the evening by the monks, who came to take her away. When Torpietro raised her up and told her all was ready, she gazed round the room in a vacant manner for some moments, and then said she too was ready: the monks almost carried her through the house and down a private staircase; she was then lifted into a carriage, Torpietro and the old woman accompanied her, and mute and stupefied she drove from the mansion of her fathers, never to return.

The following morning the unhappy Count learned the disappearance of the Marchesa, and was near falling into a new fit of madness. Nobody in the house could tell him where she had gone to, for no one had been entrusted with the secret, except the old woman at the moment she went away; to obtain this information he rushed from the palace in search of Torpietro, against whom he raged with hate. Unfortunately, he met the Monk

in a street near his monastery; he arrested him violently by the arm, and demanded where he had inveigled his bride? The Monk, whose hate was even more deep and deadly than his own, and that was now roused by this rough treatment and affronting insinuation, equivocated the question maliciously; the young noble was transported, and grasping him by the throat, exclaimed, "Fiend of hell! tell me where you have placed my love, or, by my soul! I will trample you to dust beneath my feet!" Torpietro cried aloud with pain and fear; a number of low wretches, all eager to protect a man of God, immediately ran to his assistance, and the Count would have suffered indignities from their zeal, if at that moment a patrol of soldiers, commanded by an officer who knew his family, had not approached. This officer rescued him from the effects of popular fury, and extorted an answer from the Monk.

"The Marchesa," said he, "has taken refuge from the persecutions of that impious man in a religious retirement, until the cessation of the present calamity permit the holy house of Santa Chiara to receive her in its sisterhood."

"But where is she? What retirement do you speak of?"

“ That I am solemnly bound not to disclose—to ask me is useless ; all your ruffian violence cannot force that from me. Let me retire. You have basely injured me, young man ; you have wronged my holy order with your violence and contumely ; but I forgive you, and go to supplicate Heaven to forgive you also !”

So saying, Torpietro walked on amidst the applause of a bigoted multitude, that shouted curses after the hapless Filipetto, who then wandered through the depopulated streets of the capital without plan or object. At nightfall, panting and exhausted, like a man that had been chased by a fearful enemy, he returned to the Marchesa's palace, where the kind-hearted Onofrio with difficulty prevailed upon him to take a little sustenance and repose. It would be too long and too sad a detail, to enter into all the sufferings and frenzy of the unfortunate young man : part of the day and night he paced, with a despairing mind, through the vast splendid apartments in which he had spent such blissful moments : he would sit at times for hours before a full-length portrait of the Marchesa, weeping and expostulating to the beautiful shadow ; and then, driven by the vehemence of his feelings, he would run out of doors, and seek to relieve his

bound-up heart by open air and rapid motion. In these wanderings, his eye was continually attracted by objects the most afflicting and the most horrid, which acted on him with the power of fascination; he would pause in the squares where piles of dead bodies were burning, (for the most simple sepulture was now accorded only to the rich and great,) and with folded arms, intently watch the flames consuming the miserable remains of mortality: he would follow the funeral procession, and see the body hurled into the dark vault; and he more than once forced himself into the extensive catacombs without the city, in the gloomy recesses of which thousands of bodies lay heaped up indiscriminately. Although with all this he did not contract disease and die, as he wished, yet he almost entirely alienated his mind, and reduced himself to a pitiable state of moral and physical weakness.

At length, when the city of Naples was almost depopulated, and, with most of her provinces, reduced to a cemetery, the expiatory hermitage of Suor Orsola was completed, about the end of August, at which season the sultry temperature of the air is, in this country, generally cooled by torrents of rain. It happened this year as usual: the air was consequently freshened; the corruption and

fifth of the city were washed away ; no new case of the plague occurred, and many who had the infection at the time recovered :—here was the accomplishment of Suor Orsola's prophecy ; and the Neapolitans acknowledged with grateful hearts, that the city was saved by her intimation and their devotion ! *

As soon as the council of health and public safety declared that the malady no longer existed, the Count's prudent father opened his door to his unhappy son ; and, with the rest of his family, and with his friends, endeavoured to draw him from the dreadful state into which he had fallen, and watched over him with an attentive and fearing eye. The equally hapless Marchesa was in the mean while received within the cloisters of Santa Chiara ; where, still feeling the force of her reprobated passion, dreading the effects of delay, and influenced by her spiritual friends, she hastened to bind herself with an indissoluble tie. A dispensation was obtained to abbreviate her noviciate ;

* The monastery of Suor Orsola is to this day one of the most remarkable buildings on the hill of St. Elmo. Its dark, massive walls are seen towering far above the Toledo. From the portal of the monastery there is one of the finest views of the city and bay.

every thing was rapidly disposed, and the fatal moment fixed on which she should take the veil.

That day arrived : all Naples resounded with the report ; it reached the ears of the Count, and he contrived to elude the vigilance of his guards, and to enter Santa Chiara before the ceremony began. In making his way along the aisle he met Torpistro ; the Monk fixed his leaden eyes on him ; an expression of triumph quivered over his hard features ; but Filipetto passed on, for there was not enough energy in his heart for hate or revenge. To be near the spot where the sacrifice of his happiness was to be completed, and at the same time to escape observation, he stationed himself in a dark corner of the church, (beneath the gothic tomb of an Anjou Queen of Naples, a culpable, but a beautiful and unfortunate woman,) a little to the right of the high altar. Presently, the spacious body of the church began to fill with spectators ; ranges of elevated seats, covered with costly silk, were occupied by the viceroval court and persons of distinction ; and many a fair dame, and many a gallant cavalier, sat there in intense, mute interest, to see the being who had been an object of jealousy and of rivalry, of admiration and of love, renounce the world she adorned, and the lover she adored,

in the bright spring of her charms. Anon, the peals of the organ resounded within the lofty walls, and the soft voices of the nuns poured from the gilt lattices above : the *missa cantata* was performed with extraordinary magnificence and effect ; a rosy cardinal preached a sermon on the virtues and felicity of a monastic life ; and then, while music pealed around, and the air was charged with incense, the lovely Marchesa, dressed in the splendour that befitted her rank, advanced with downcast eyes and faltering steps, between two old nuns.

With what feelings did he, who lived in her, see her again, in such a situation, and for the last time ! How did he strain his eyes on that beautiful face, and on that agitated, exquisite form ! There was nothing definite in what he felt, as the ceremony proceeded ; his heart lay deep and cold, as if buried beneath a mountain of ice ; his figure was drawn up to the tensity of paralysis, and large, cold drops of moisture descended from his forehead. But when he saw the barbarous scissors cut off her luxuriant hair ; when he saw the long black crape veil, and heard her faintly muttering the vow, a deep groan of unutterable anguish escaped him, and he rushed from the church.

The Count's consciousness of existence finished at that moment—the few remaining months he breathed upon the earth had little of life in them; his reason was gone, and his heart was broken within him—his death was, therefore, a boon to his afflicted friends, and a release for the sufferer.

THE END.

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